



*A Service of Worship
for Sunday
5 September 2010*

*And so we stand confused and reluctant in the abyss
between what we have experienced as fact and what
we have envisioned as possible, unable either to linger
forever in whimpering passivity in bondage to idols in
which we no longer believe or to leap through our fear in
the passion that threatens to transform us.*

Carter Heyward

please enter for worship in silence

*+ Prelude:

J.S. Bach and J.G. Walther

“All Glory Be to God”

Call to Worship

*+ Opening Hymn 262:

National Hymn

“God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand”

God of the ages, whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
Our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past;
in this free land by thee our lot is cast;
Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay;
Thy word our law, thy paths our chosen way.

From war’s alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be thy strong arm our ever sure defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase;
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh thy people on their toilsome way,
Lead us from night to never ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
And glory, laud, and praise be ever thine.

+ Opening Prayer

**Amid all the noise of our lives,
we take this moment to sit in silence—
to give thanks for another day,
to give thanks for all those in our lives
who have brought us warmth and love,
to give thanks for the gift of life.**

**Let us open ourselves, here, now,
to the process of becoming more whole—
of living more fully,
of giving and forgiving more freely,
of understanding more completely
the meaning of our lives here on this earth.**

* *Ushers will seat latecomers*

+ *Please stand if you are able*

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

A Time for Children

*+ Response:

Personent Hodie

Down to earth, as a dove, Came to light holy love:
Jesus Christ from above bringing great salvation
Meant for every nation.
Let us sing, sing, sing, dance and spring, spring, spring.
Christ is here, ever near! Gloria in excelsis.

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**We confess what we know to be true
that the divine is not some aloof deity
hiding beyond the clouds above.**

**We confess what we fear to be true
that the *kindom* of heaven, the beloved community
will only come when we build it ourselves.**

**We confess what we hope to be true
that we are travelers on history's arc
and we are anything but alone.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Franz Schubert

Sonatina No. 1

Andante

Proclamation: Breaking the Mold

“You Are Before Me, Lord”

You are before me, Lord, you are behind,
And over me you have spread out your hand;
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
Too high to grasp, too great to understand.

Then from your spirit where, Lord, shall I go;
And from your presence where, Lord, shall I fly?
If I ascend to heaven you are there,
And still are with me if in hell I lie.

If I should take my flight into the dawn,
If I should dwell on ocean’s farthest shore,
Your mighty hand will rest upon me still,
And your right hand will guard me evermore.

If I should say, “Let darkness cover me,
And I shall hide within the veil of the night,”
Surely the darkness is not dark to you:
The night is as the day, the darkness light.

Search me, O God, search me and know my heart;
Try me, O God, my mind and spirit try;
Keep me from any path that gives you pain,
And lead me in the everlasting way.

Invitation

Pastoral Prayer

Offering

Offertory:

Andantino

Cesar Franck

First Sunday Food Offering

+ Prayer of Dedication

**Tender God, touch us,
Be touched by us,
Make us lovers of humanity,
Compassionate friends of all creation.
Gracious God, hear us into speech,
Speak us into acting,
And through us, recreate the world.**

* *Ushers will seat latecomers*

+ *Please stand if you are able*

+ Doxology

Old Hundredth

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Sing praise all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host.
Praise Maker, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

+ Affirmation of Faith

**Each of us is an artist
Whose task it is to shape life
Into some semblance of the pattern
We dream about. The molding
Is not of self alone, but of shared
Tomorrows and times we shall never see.
So let us be about our task.
The materials are very precious
and perishable.**

+ Closing Hymn 321:

Song 13

“Holy Spirit, Truth Divine”

Holy Spirit, truth divine, Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward light, Wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, love divine, Glow within this heart of mine;
Kindle every high desire; Perish self in Thy pure fire.

Holy Spirit, power divine, Fill and nerve this will of mine;
By Thee may I strongly live, Bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, right divine, Make my conscience wholly Thine;
Be my law, and I shall be Firmly bound, forever free.

Words of Dismissal

Postlude

Charles W. Ore

“Fanfare” in A flat major

+ *Please stand if you are able*

Worship

The acolyte lights the candles at the beginning of worship and carries the light out at the conclusion of the service. The acolyte is **Byron Kress**.

Maggi Tucker is the guest organist today.

The worship leaders are **Angie Parle** and **Byron Kress**.

The Call to Worship is “Life is Always Unfinished Business” by Richard Gilbert.

The Opening Prayer is from Timothy Haley in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Unison Confession is by **Jeremy Rutledge**.

The Sonatina is played by **Linda Day**, violin and **Maggi Tucker**, piano.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Celebrating Women*, edited by Janet Morley and Hannah Ward.

The Affirmation of Faith is “73 Voices” by Arthur Graham.

Calendar

Sunday 9/5	9:00 a.m.	Education Hour
	10:00 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	10:30 a.m.	Worship
		First Sunday Food Offering
Monday 9/6	Office Closed	Labor Day
Tuesday 9/7	6:30 p.m.	Yoga
Wednesday 9/8	9:00 a.m.	Garden Work Day
	7:00 p.m.	Deacons Meeting
Thursday 9/9	7:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday 9/11	9:00 a.m.	Art as Prayer
Sunday 9/12	8:30 a.m.	Worship
	9:40 a.m.	Education Hour
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Worship

Please note: The Fall schedule resumes next Sunday with two services.

Education Hour

Children & Youth Education:

Our children and youth will meet together for Summer Sunday School. We will gather in the library of the church building each week to learn about the people of the Hebrew Bible and to have a lot of fun.

Adult Education:

There will be no adult classes on September 5, Labor Day weekend.

Parents Forum - Parents Forum meets every third Sunday of the month during education hour in Laura's office in Meeks House. The next meeting will take place on September 19.

Helpful Information

Childcare Childcare is provided in the nursery beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Communication Cards If you're a visitor with us, please fill out a blue communication card and drop it in the offering basket.

Covenant Membership Membership in Covenant Church is open to all persons who affirm the loving presence of God, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the revealed Spirit throughout the ages. Those interested in learning more about Covenant are encouraged to express that interest to one of the ministers or the worship leader. Any person desiring membership first becomes an inquirer and is asked to attend an orientation class designed to acquaint inquirers with the church and its beliefs. After a period of eight weeks, the inquirer may indicate a desire to become a member.

Celebrations and Concerns If you would like to share a celebration or concern with the Covenant community, please post it on the announcements board in the narthex or e-mail it to prayer@covenanthouston.org.

Covenant Newsletter To subscribe to the monthly newsletter, please send an e-mail request to office@covenanthouston.org. The newsletter is also available online at www.covenanthouston.org.

Covenant Recycles If you do not wish to keep your order of worship this Sunday, please recycle it by placing it on the stand located in the narthex on your way out.

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, 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.