

Education Hour

Children's Education:

Pre-K - 2nd Grade- We are studying stories from the Bible through creative activities and crafts using the Seasons of the Spirit curriculum. This class will meet in the Library (to the left of the Workroom.)

3rd Grade - 5th Grade - We are using The Seasons of the Spirit curriculum, music, and art projects to examine the stories of the Bible through the lectionary. This class will meet in the Classroom (to the right of the Workroom.)

Youth Education: We continue with the problem of suffering by exploring "J.B." by Archibald MacLeish and the book of Job. The class will meet on the third floor of the Meeks House (across Caroline Street from the church).

Adult Education:

Bible Discussion: In the Meeks house, Rick Casswell will lead a discussion of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

In The Sanctuary: In the sanctuary, Bill Howze will lead an exploration of visual representations of doubt. If that brings any images to mind, please bring them with you.

Parents Forum - Parents Forum meets every 3rd Sunday during Education Hour in Laura's office in Meeks House.

Calendar

Sunday 1/24	8:15 a.m.	Worship
	9:15 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	9:30 a.m.	Education
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Tuesday 1/26	6:30 p.m.	Yoga
Wednesday 1/27	7:00 p.m.	Deacons Meeting
Thursday 1/28	7:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday 1/31	8:15 a.m.	Worship
	9:15 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	9:30 a.m.	Education
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Worship

Helpful Information

Childcare Childcare is provided in the nursery beginning at 8:45 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 There is a weekly Newsletter available online at www.covenanthouston.org. To have this Newsletter e-mailed to you, please send an e-mail request to office@covenanthouston.org.

Covenant Recycles If you do not wish to keep your bulletin 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.

Covenant Church
an ecumenical liberal baptist
congregation

Members of Covenant
Ministers

Jeremy Rutledge
Minister

Laura Mayo
Associate Minister

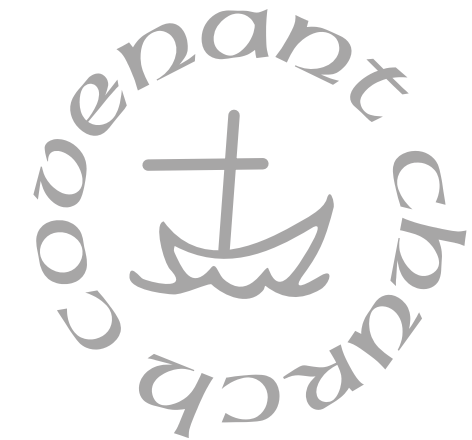
Fran Avera
Minister of Music

Carl McAliley
Organist

Pat Long
Office Administrator

Hanh-Nhi Ngo
Office Administrator

Covenant Church
4949 Caroline
Houston, TX 77004
713.668.8830



A Service of Worship for Sunday 24 January 2010

The Bible is not an epic about the life of heroes but the story of every [person] in all climates and all ages. Its topic is the world, the whole of history, containing the pattern of a constitution of a united humankind as well as guidance toward establishing such a union. It shows the way to nations as well as to individuals. It continues to scatter seeds of justice and compassion, to echo God's cry to the world and to pierce our armor of callousness.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

please enter for worship in silence

* Prelude
 “Fugue in E-flat Major” J.S. Bach

Call to Worship

Choral Introit (11:00)
 “All Praise to God for Song God Gives” Sacred Song

*+ Processional Hymn 210:
 “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past” St. Anne

* Opening Prayer

May a good vision catch me.
May a benevolent vision take hold of me and move me.
May a deep and full vision come over me
and burst open around me.
May a luminous vision inform me, enfold me.
May I awaken into the story that surrounds,
May I awaken into the beautiful story.
May the wondrous story find me.
May the wilderness that makes beauty arise between two loves,
arise beautifully between my body and the body of this land,
between my flesh and the flesh of this earth,
here and now, on this day,
May I taste something sacred.

Scripture Lesson Nehemiah 8:1-10
 Luke 4:14-22

These are our sacred stories.
Thanks be to God.

A Time for Children

*+ Response: Mueller
*Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
 close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
 and teach us to love Thee and help us to share.*

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

Forgive us, God,
when we live our lives
within the lines,
when we say
this is the shape of our
work
this is the boundary of our

* *Ushers will seat latecomers*
 + *Please stand if you are able*

habitation
these are the limits to our
love
these are the lines of our
vision
these, and none other.

Draw us beyond our patterns
into yours:
shifting, moving,
curving, spiraling,
many-colored, ever-changing,
stretching, pushing,
challenging, renaming,
unsettling, disturbing,
casting forth,
and welcoming home.

Words of Assurance

Music (8:15) Antonio Vivaldi
 Sonata in A Minor
 Largo

(11:00) John Ferguson
 “Who Is This?”

Proclamation: These Stories

Hymn 324 Open My Eyes
 “Open My Eyes That I May See”

Invitation

Pastoral Prayer

Offering
 Offertory: Gordon Balch Nevin
 “Toccata in D Minor”

+ Prayer of Dedication

O God, through the offering of these gifts may we become a more
open people . . .
open-minded in hearing your Word and wisdom,
open-hearted in healing a broken world,
open-handed in heeding your call for charity and acts of love.
With thanks for all good gifts,
we present a portion of our substance
and the whole of ourselves. Amen.

+ 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.

+ *Please stand if you are able*

Affirmation of Faith

We affirm the presence of God in life,
in the mystical source of creative impulse,
in the instinct to nurture,
in the promise of help, given and received.

We affirm the presence of God in love,
in affection freely offered,
in compassion without borders,
in a willingness to identify with the unfamiliar.

We affirm the presence of God as Being,
in the essence of creation,
at the core of humanity,
in the genetic structure which surrounds the ego.

For our experience of God
as life,
as love,
as the Ground of All Being,

We give thanks
and risk the possibility of completeness,
even in the midst of chaos,
even if only for a moment.

+ Recessional Hymn 353 Das Neugeborne Kindelein
 “Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here”

Unison Words of Dismissal

The power of a story is a power over which we do not have
ultimate control, since it can catch us off guard, tell us things
about ourselves we would prefer not to know, and liberate us to
move in directions we would never have imagined.

Choral Benediction (11:00) Sacred Song
 “All Praise to God for Song God Gives”

Postlude Gaston Litaize
 “Prélude Liturgique No. 11”

Worship

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

The Worship Leaders are **Lynn McLean** and **Mac Wells**.

The Call to Worship is from *Tunkashila* by Gerald Hausman.

The Opening Prayer is from David Abram, ecologist and author, as reprinted in *Prayers for a Thousand Years*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

The Time for Children is led by **Virginia Wells**.

The Unison Confession is from *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas* by Jan Richardson.

Mendy Smith is the violist at the early service.
Josh Cowan plays the viola in the anthem.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Touch Holiness* by Ruth Duck and Maren Tirabassi.

The Affirmation of Faith is by **Jim Avera**.

The Unison Words of Dismissal is from *Persuade Us to Rejoice* by Robert McAfee Brown.