

## 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 right 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 left of the Workroom.)

**Youth Education:** We are continuing a study of Jesus using *Jesus and His Kingdom of Equals*. This book uses biblical scholarship and information from the Jesus Seminar to create portraits of Jesus. We will become more familiar with Jesus' context in history as well as his Jewish identity.

### Adult Education:

**In the Sanctuary** - Jeremy will lead the first of two Sundays of discussion involving clips from the documentary, "Renewal: Stories from America's Religious-Environmental Movement." Join us to consider a story involving Southern Illinois farmers, inner-city Chicago Muslims, and a practice that has brought them together. We'll spend fifteen minutes viewing the video and follow with discussion. Bruce Yaeger will lead the class next Sunday.

**Bible Discussion** - Bible study in Meeks House will be led by Tim Wegner on April 18. Text: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20).

**Parents Forum** - Parents Forum meets every third Sunday of the month during Education Hour in Laura's office in Meeks House. Join us Sunday, April 18, as we have a second discussion on cultural identity with Laura Mitchell: Have you often wondered about how to talk to your children about race, culture, and ethnicity? I have, too. Come join us as we ask our questions together. We can talk about how our children navigate through such topics as racial identity, naming ourselves, and claiming our culture.

## Calendar

Sunday 4/18	8:15 a.m.	Worship
	9:15 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	9:30 a.m.	Education
		Parents Forum
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	11:00 a.m.	Worship
	12:00 p.m.	Pizza Party & Earth Day Litter Pick-Up
	5:00 p.m.	Literature Book Group
	6:00 p.m.	Theology Book Group
Tuesday 4/20	6:30 p.m.	Yoga
Wednesday 4/21	10:00 a.m.	Garden Work Day
	7:00 p.m.	Council Meeting
Thursday 4/22	7:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday 4/24	9:00 a.m.	Choir Bach Program Rehearsal
Sunday 4/25	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
	4:00 p.m.	Bach Concert

## Helpful Information

**Childcare** Childcare is provided in the nursery beginning at 8:15 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.

**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 McAuley

Organist

Pat Long

Office Administrator

Hanh-Nhi Ngo

Office Administrator

the planet earth is a onetime project.

Covenant Church  
4949 Caroline  
Houston, TX 77004  
713.668.8830

A Service of Worship  
for Earth Sunday  
18 April 2010

*The day of my spiritual awakening  
was the day I saw—and knew I saw—  
all things in God and God in all things.*

Mechtild of Magdeburg

\* Prelude Richard Purvis  
Capriccio (on the Notes of the Cuckoo)

Choral Introit (11:00) Amstein  
“Thank You, God”

Call to Worship

\*+ Processional Hymn 469: Bunessan  
“Morning Has Broken”

+ Opening Sentences

**Earth is the maternal principle out of which we are born  
and from which we derive all that we are and all that we have.  
We come into being in and through the Earth.  
Simply put, we are Earthlings.  
The Earth is our origin, our nourishment,  
our educator, our healer, our fulfillment.  
At its core, even our spirituality is Earth derived.  
The human and the Earth are totally implicated, each in the other.  
If there is no spirituality in the Earth,  
then there is no spirituality in ourselves.**

Music (11:00) “Inscription of Hope” Randall Stroope

*I believe in the sun even when it is not shining,  
And I believe in love even when there’s no one there.  
And I believe in God even when he is silent,  
I believe through any trial there is always a way.  
But sometimes in this suffering and hopeless despair,  
My heart cries for shelter, to know someone’s there.  
But a voice rises within me saying hold on my child,  
I’ll give you strength, I’ll give you hope, Just stay a little while.*

*May there someday be sunshine, May there someday be happiness,  
May there someday be love, May there someday be peace.*

*- words scratched in a cellar wall where Jewish children  
hid during WWII*

Scripture Lesson Exodus 3:1-5

These are our sacred stories.  
**Thanks be to God.**

A Time for Children

\*+ Response: Madrid

*Come children, join to sing “Alleluia Amen.”  
Loud praise to Christ we sing “Alleluia Amen.”  
Let all with heart and voice, now on this day rejoice.  
Praise is God’s gracious choice, “Alleluia Amen.”*

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

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**For God’s sake, be done  
with this jabber of “a better world.”  
What blasphemy! No “futuristic”  
twit or child thereof ever  
in embodied light will see  
a better world than this, though they  
foretell inevitably a worse.  
Do something! Go cut the weeds  
beside the oblivious road. Pick up  
the cans and bottles, old tires,  
and dead predictions. No future  
can be stuffed into this presence  
except by being dead. The day is  
clear and bright, and overhead  
the sun not yet half finished  
with his daily praise.**

Words of Assurance

Music (8:15) Rebecca Clarke  
“Passacaglia on an Old English Tune”

(11:00) Edward Elgar  
“As Torrents in Summer”

*As torrents in summer, half dried in their channels,  
Suddenly rise, though the sky is still cloudless,  
For rain has been falling far off at their fountains;*

*So hearts that are fainting grow full to o’erflowing,  
And they that behold it marvel and know not  
That God at their fountains far off has been raining.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Meditation: Barefoot Prayers

+ Hymn 556 Halifax  
“The World Abounds with God’s Free Grace”

Pastoral Prayer

Offering

Offertory: Camille Saint-Saëns  
Improvisation, Opus 150, No. 7: Allegro giocoso

+ Prayer of Dedication

**Earth’s crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.**

+ 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

THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

*If you would like to take communion, but are unable  
to come forward, please notify an usher  
and the elements will be brought to you.*

*Our communion elements include both wine and water.  
Gluten-free bread is also available.*

+ Affirmation of Faith

**The spiritual practice of going barefoot...  
can lead you to love God with your whole self,  
and your neighbor as yourself,  
without leaving your backyard.  
Just do it, and the doing will teach you...  
Or keep your shoes on, if you wish.  
As long as you are on the earth and you know it,  
you are where you are supposed to be.  
You have everything you need...**

+ Recessional Hymn 553 East Acklam  
“For the Fruit of All Creation”

Words of Dismissal

Choral Benediction (11:00) Amstein  
“Thank You, God”

Postlude J. L. Krebs  
Prelude in F Major

## Worship

The cover art was designed by **Kay Duncan**; it contains the words of Thomas Berry.

The mild scent of lemon and cedar is provided by **Robert and Dody Carter**, who mixed essential oils with purified water to create the aroma.

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 **Luke Witten**.

The Worship Leaders are **Ron Sandberg** and **Blakely Kress**.

The Call to Worship is from *Life Tides* by Elizabeth Tarbox.

The Opening Sentences are from “The Spirituality of the Earth” in *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century* by Thomas Berry.

“Inscription of Hope” is sung by the Children and Youth of Covenant under the direction of **Josh Cowan**.

The Time for Children is led by **Daniel Sanborn**.

The Unison Confession is “The Future” by Wendell Berry.

The violist at the early service is **Mendy Smith**.

The Prayer of Dedication is from “Aurora Leigh” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

We celebrate Earth Sunday communion with wine locally produced in the Texas Hill Country and bread freshly baked by **John Pirtle**.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by Barbara Brown Taylor.