

## 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 Biblical 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 Bible study on December 13, we will focus on Luke 3:7-18, the longest Gospel passage dealing with the words of John the Baptist. This passage has led different readers to claim John to be a prophet, an ethicist, an advocate for social justice, or even a madman. Please feel welcome to join us in exploring these questions and others.

**In The Sanctuary:** In the sanctuary, Jim Avera will provide a "consolidated history" of Advent and Christmas hymnody, and will discuss many of the better known hymns for that period as well as a brief lesson on how to read information about hymns in our hymnal. Come join us for a timeline that takes us from the 4th century to present!

**Parents Forum -** We will have a Parents Forum meeting every 3rd Sunday during Education Hour in Laura's office in Meeks House.

## Calendar

Sunday 12/13	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
	12:15 p.m.	All Church Committee Meetings
Tuesday 12/15	6:30 p.m.	Yoga
Wednesday 12/16	10:00 a.m.	Garden Workday
	7:00 p.m.	Council Meeting
Thursday 12/17	7:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday 12/19	10:00 a.m.	Garden Workday
Sunday 12/20	8:15 a.m.	Worship
	9:15 a.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
		Carols & Wassail
	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Monday 12/21	6:30 p.m.	Winter Solstice Celebration at Labyrinth
Tuesday 12/22	6:30 p.m.	Yoga
Wednesday 12/23	10:00 a.m.	Garden Workday
Thursday 12/24	6:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Pledged dollars goal is \$340,000.  
Currently raised: \$340,306.

Pledged hours goal is 450.  
Currently raised: 5,174 hours



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

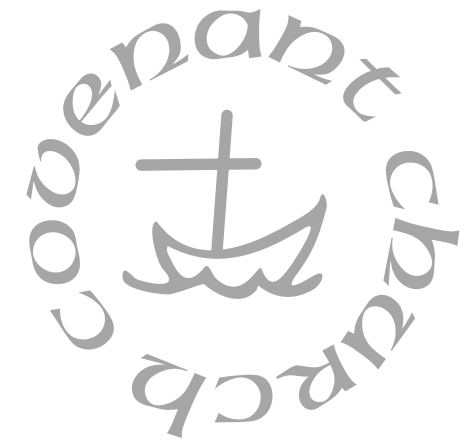
Laura Mayo  
Associate Minister

Fran Avera  
Minister of Music

Carl McAliley  
Organist

Pat Long  
Office Administrator

Hanh-Nhi Ngo  
Office Administrator



## A Service of Worship for the Third Sunday of Advent 13 December 09

*If there is to be peace in the world,  
There must be peace in the nations.*

*If there is to be peace in the nations,  
There must be peace in the cities.*

*If there is to be peace in the cities,  
There must be peace between neighbors.*

*If there is to be peace between neighbors,  
There must be peace in the home.*

*If there is to be peace in the home,  
There must be peace in the heart.*

Lao-Tse

*please enter for worship in silence*

Covenant Church  
4949 Caroline  
Houston, TX 77004  
713.668.8830

\* Prelude Carol Prelude on “Greensleeves” Richard Purvis  
Choral Introit (11:00) Psalm 42  
“Comfort, Comfort You My People”  
Call to Worship  
\*+ Processional Hymn 38: Carol  
“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

Lighting the Third Advent Candle  
Response: Cradle Song  
*Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare  
For a gift that compels us with justice to care.  
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.  
One candle is lit for the reign of God’s peace.*

Scripture Lesson Matthew 2:13-23  
These are our sacred stories.  
**Thanks be to our 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

**Behind resistance,  
behind aggression and jealousy,  
behind any kind of tension,  
there is a soft spot  
we are trying to protect.  
Someone’s actions hurt our feelings  
and before we notice what we’re doing,  
we armor ourselves  
in a very old and familiar way.  
We can either let go  
and connect with that soft spot  
or we can continue  
to stubbornly hold on...**

**The real work of the peacemaker  
is to find the soft spot  
and the tenderness in that very uneasy place  
and stay with it.**

Words of Assurance

Deacons’ Group Ministry

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

Music (8:15) J.S. Bach  
“Suscepit Israel”  
*God has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy.*  
(11:00) Anton Bruckner  
“Virga Jesse floruit”  
*The rod of Jesse has blossomed. Mary has given birth to one who  
was both God and man. God has given back peace to humanity,  
reconciling the lowest with the highest to God’s self. Alleluia!*

Proclamation: “Stille Nacht”

Hymn 60 Stille Nacht  
“Silent Night, Holy Night”  
Verse 1 will be sung in German. Please join in singing verse 2.

Statement from Council

Offering Offertory: J.S. Bach  
“Savior of the Nations, Come”

+ Prayer of Dedication

**If there is to be peace  
may it begin with us  
in the present moment.**

**If there is to be peace  
may we practice it  
in the here and now.**

**If there is to be peace  
may we pray for it  
in the choices we make today.**

+ 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.*

## THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to The Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Share the Bread and the Cup

*If you would like to take communion, but are unable to come forward,  
please notify the 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

**We believe in the season of Advent  
in the times of waiting  
in moments of silent contemplation  
where all of our wonderings**

+ *Please stand if you are able*

**and our wanderings  
can be still and listen.**

**We believe in the possibility of peace  
in the small voice of it  
in its beginning as innermost seeds  
that need to be nourished  
and cultivated  
and scattered along the way.**

**We believe in the hope of a story  
in the sharing of it  
in the conversation that begins  
among all that is holy and human  
during the purple interlude  
that precedes the dawn.**

+ Recessional Hymn

“I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

*I heard the bells on Christmas day their old familiar carols play, and wild  
and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth good will to all.*

*I thought how, as the day had come, the belfries of all Christendom had  
roll’d along th’un broken song of peace on earth good will to all.*

*And in despair I bow’d my head: “There is no peace on earth,” I said,  
“For hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth good will to all.*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: “God is not dead, nor doth God  
sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth good will  
to all.*

Words of Dismissal

Choral Benediction (11:00) Psalm 42  
“For the Herald’s Voice Is Calling”

Postlude “Rorate Caeli” Jeanne Demessieux

## 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 **Ruben Milano**.

The Worship Leaders are **Casey Gambill** and **Alexa Daggett**.

The Call to Worship is adapted from *On Earth as in Heaven: A Liberation Spirituality of Sharing* by Dorothee Sölle.

**Roger Bumgardner** lights the third candle of Advent at the 8:15 service. **Rick Caswell** lights the candle at the 11:00 service.

The Unison Confession is adapted from *Practicing Peace in Times of War* by Pema Chödrön.

The Deacons’ Group Ministry reports are given by **Martha Murphree** (8:15) and **Beverly Rodgers** (11:00).

**Joyce Courtois**, **Casey Gambill** and **Margie Latham** sing at the early service.

**Casey Gambill** sings the first verse of “Silent Night” at the early service.

The Church Council Statement is given by **Reagan Miller** (8:15) and **Jay Hooker** (11:00).

The Prayer of Dedication and Affirmation of Faith are by **Jeremy Rutledge**.