



*A Service of Worship for
Fourth Sunday of Lent
10 March 2024*

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter.
I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking
about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon.

But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted
over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into
carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into
barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and
eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a
woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and
when I cried out with my mother's grief,
none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of
audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey.

What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights?

If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart,
wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as
men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did
your Christ come from? From God and a woman!

Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside
down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it
right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Sojourner Truth

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Rachel Laurin
(1961-2023)

“Lullaby on ‘Kingsfold’”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #522

Land of Rest

“Lord, When I Came Into This Life”

**Lord, when I came into this life
You called me by my name;
Today I come, commit myself,
Responding to Your claim.**

**Within the circle of the faith
As member of Your cast,
I take my place with all the saints
Of future, present, past.**

**In all the tensions of my life,
Between my faith and doubt,
Let Your great Spirit give me hope,
Sustain me, lead me out.**

**So, help me in my unbelief
And let my life be true:
Feet firmly planted on the earth,
My sights set high on You.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Opening Prayer

Eternal God of all peoples and races, may all your children learn to live together in peace and friendship.

**Let the day come when oppression,
terrorism, discrimination and prejudice
will be forgotten, and all the world filled with your spirit.**

**May that day come soon, O God; the day foretold by
the prophets and sages, the day for which we long,
when all humanity will recognize that it is one family.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Acts 16:11-15; History of Covenant

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Welcoming New Member

Leader: In thanksgiving for the welcome we have found in this place and with each other we gladly receive this new member into the membership of our church.

Community: **Autumn Hendon, we welcome you into this community of faith. Your presence among us has already enhanced our congregation.**

All: **We now enter into covenant with one another to live together in love and to care for one another and for our neighbors as God cares for each one of us.**

Leader: In the understanding that we are called to a shared life, will you express your covenant with us?

New Member: I covenant with you to engage in this community and to open myself to the joys and sorrows of shared life.

Community: Together with you, and with the help of God, we intend by the corporate sharing of our lives to build a community of faith, love, understanding, and welcome in the world.

All: **We seek to remain ever alert to the voice of human need wherever it may be found. We celebrate that we do not go alone. We are grateful for each companion on our journey and for this community of encouragement, challenge, and shared work for justice, peace, and love.**

⁺*Please stand in body or spirit*

Time for Children

+Response:

THE SERVANT SONG

The musical score for 'The Servant Song' is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics 'I will weep when you are weep - ing; When you laugh I'll' are written below the first staff. The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics 'laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor - row'. The third staff concludes the piece with the lyrics ''Til we've seen this jour - - ney through.' and features a key change to 3/4 time and a final 4/4 time signature.

I will weep when you are weep - ing; When you laugh I'll
laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor - row
'Til we've seen this jour - - ney through.

Text: 87 87; Richard Gillard, b. 1953.

Music: SERVANT SONG; Richard Gillard; harm. by Betty Pulkingham, b. 1928.

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Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

To You, The Word behind all words, we pray:

**For flawed definitions,
for mistaken designations,
for misuse of language,
forgive us.**

**For mistaking freedom
for independence,
for having wants
and calling them needs,
for prejudices
we designate as preferences,
for confronting the difficult
and calling it impossible,
forgive us.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**For confusing religion and theology
with faith,
for confusing thinking and reflecting
for action,
for letting fear and hesitancy
pass for sense and sensibility
forgive us.**

**For calling a brother
enemy
or a sister
fool;
or us
them,
forgive us.**

**For failing
and then calling ourselves failures,
forgive us.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Leo Sowerby

“I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes”

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the Lord
Who made heaven and earth.*

*God will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
God who keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, God who keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord is thy keeper;
thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day
Nor the moon by night.*

*The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil;
and shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and even for ever more.
Amen.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn

Slane

“God of the Women”

**God of the women who answered your call,
Trusting your promises, giving their all,
Women like Sarah and Hannah and Ruth —
Give us their courage to live in your truth.**

**God of the women who walked Jesus' Way,
Giving their resources, learning to pray,
Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and more —
May we give freely as they did before.**

**God of the women long put to the test,
Left out of stories, forgotten, oppressed,
Quietly asking: "Who smiled at my birth?" —
In Jesus' dying you show us our worth.**

**God of the women who ran from the tomb,
Prayed with the others in that upper room,
Then felt your Spirit on Pentecost Day —
May we so gladly proclaim you today.**

**O God of Phoebe and ministers all,
May we be joyful in answering your call.
Give us the strength of your Spirit so near
That we may share in your ministry here.**

Prayer

Offering
Offertory

Elfrida Andrée
(1841-1929)

“Cantilena”

⁺Prayer of Dedication

**No longer is it enough to
maintain that I am a daughter of God.
No longer can I believe simply that
God is my Mother as well as my Father.
No longer am I content to change
the language of our liturgies in order to be
able to speak of, and affirm, myself and
other women as sisters.
Changing pronouns from “he” to “she” is fine,
and it must happen—and is now beginning
to happen here and there in the church.
But it is not enough.**

**What must happen, and what is happening
now among feminist theologians,
is that we are digging into assumptions
that have undergirded the givens in Christian tradition.**

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.***

⁺Affirmation of Faith

**The truth is, in order to heal we need to tell our stories
and have them witnessed...The story itself becomes a vessel
that holds us up, that sustains, that allows us to order
our jumbled experiences into meaning.
As I told my stories of fear, awakening, struggle,
and transformation and had them received, heard,
and validated by other women, I found healing.
I also needed to hear other women's stories
in order to see and embrace my own.
Sometimes another woman's story becomes a mirror**

**that shows me a self I haven't seen before.
When I listen to her tell it, her experience quickens
and clarifies my own. Her questions rouse mine.
Her conflicts illumine my conflicts. Her resolutions call forth my hope.
Her strengths summon my strengths.
All of this can happen even when our stories and our lives are very
different.**

+Closing Hymn #435

Es flog ein kleins Waldvögelein

“We All Are One in Mission”

**We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.
A single, great commission compels us from above
To plan and work together that all may know Christ’s love.**

**We all are called for service to witness in God’s name;
Our ministries are different, our purpose is the same:
To touch the lives of others by God’s surprising grace
So every folk and nation may feel God’s warm embrace.**

**Now let us be united and let our song be heard.
Now let us be a vessel for God’s redeeming word.
We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.**

Benediction

***Postlude**

**Elizabeth Stirling
(1819-1895)**

“Fugue on the Old Hundredth”

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

Worship Notes

The worship leaders are the **McKinny Family**.

The Call to Worship is adapted from *In the Sanctuary of Women: A Companion for Reflection and Prayer* by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Prayer is adapted from *Gates of Prayer, The New Union Prayer Book, Central Conference of American Rabbis*.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The Covenant Singers are directed by **Fran Avera**, Minister of Music Emerita.

The text of “God of the Women” is by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Carter Heyward.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter: A Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine* by Sue Monk Kidd.

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Education 9:30 - 10:20 a.m.

Adult Education - Brian Buck, Covenant's Facilities Coordinator, will give a presentation about his journey into the arts through a spiritual lens. He will tell us how he came to be an artist and how that led to working in facility management. Brian will share pictures of his artistic work to illustrate how the arts have influenced his journey through life and explain how they are significant to him.
- *Brian Buck*

Children & Youth Education -

Children's Lesson

Title: The Falling Sky

Lesson: Accessing Sacred Guidance

Youth Lesson

Scripture: Numbers 21:4-9

- *Trena' Jamison*

A colorful poster for an Easter Egg Hunt. The background is light blue. On the left and right sides, there are stylized Easter eggs with various patterns: pink with swirls, yellow with polka dots, purple with a zigzag, green with polka dots, and blue with swirls. The title "Donations needed for our annual Easter Egg Hunt!" is written in a large, bold, purple font. Below the title, there are two paragraphs of text in a smaller, black font. The first paragraph explains that the Children & Youth Committee and the Outreach Committee are requesting help to create an exciting event for the children of Covenant and to help them reach out to other young families in Houston. The second paragraph states that the greatest need is plastic egg donations and candy donations, and that donations should be left in the Narthex by Sunday, March 24th.

Donations needed for our annual Easter Egg Hunt!

The Children & Youth Committee & the Outreach Committee are requesting your help to create an exciting event for the children of Covenant and to help us reach out to other young families in Houston. It is helpful for us to host a couple of large, welcoming events each year to extend a hand to families in our community who might be interested in visiting Covenant. These events also allow us to strengthen connections with a community that means so much to us. However, our committees are small, and we really need your help to pull off a fun event!

For this particular event, our greatest need is plastic egg donations and candy donations. (Ours have gotten old after years of reuse.) Please leave donations in the Narthex by Sunday, March 24th.

Children and Youth Announcements

Events

- **March 29:** Youth Lock-In
- **March 30:** Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- **April 21:** Children & Youth Sunday
- **June 9-13, 2024:** McMurry University Youth Camp Passport **(please see newsletter for sign-up link)**.
- **July 27-30, 2024:** Heart of Texas Camp Brownwood, TX Children Camp Passport, **(please see newsletter for sign-up link)**.

Calendar

| | | |
|---------------|---------|--|
| Sun. Mar 10 | 9:30am | Adult Education, Adult Education classroom on the 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building |
| | 9:30am | Children & Youth Education, Room B, 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building |
| | 10:20am | Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall Building |
| | 10:40am | Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary |
| | 11:00am | Worship in-person, Sanctuary and via live-stream, YouTube |
| Tue. Mar 12 | 1:00pm | Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom |
| Thurs. Mar 14 | 10:00am | Community Group, Zoom |
| | 7:15pm | Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary |

Helpful Information

Childcare: 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.

Visitor's Card: If you're a visitor with us, please submit a Visitor's Card.

Celebrations and Concerns: If you would like to share a celebration or concern with the Covenant community, please submit a Celebrations and Concerns Form.

Membership: If you are interested in learning more about Covenant, we encourage you to talk with one of the ministers or the worship leader. Email Office@covenanthouston.org.

Newsletter: To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to office@covenanthouston.org.

Office Hours: The church office is open Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm.

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.

*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

Brian Buck, Facilities Coordinator

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jason Steiner, Organist

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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.*