



*A Service of Worship for  
30 January 2022*

You speak in silence  
and all languages interpret you.  
You are the truth of all words,  
their permanence and their comfort  
and every person who listens with an open mind  
can hear you in his language  
and in her own life.  
Put words into our mouths, then,  
that comfort and shed light,  
make us alive to justice and to right,  
groan in us for a new creation,  
guide our hearts and our faith,  
let our thoughts and our labors be fruitful  
and give us the bread of peace.

Huub Oosterhuis



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

John Travers  
(1703-1758)

“Cornet Voluntary”

Call to Worship

\*+Opening Hymn #469

Bunessan

“Morning Has Broken”

+Opening Prayer

**Spirit of life, be present with us this hour.  
Join us today as we gather  
in a wider search for truth and purpose.  
In this quest, may we greet one another  
with open hearts and minds;  
may we inspire each other  
to consider new questions  
and seek deeper meaning;  
and may we cultivate wisdom and compassion.  
Let all who enter this sanctuary  
see a welcome face,  
hear a kind word,  
and find comfort in this community.  
And may all that is done and said here today  
be in service to love and justice.**

Scripture Lesson

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Time for Children

+Response:

Lasst uns erfreuen

**In every land begin the song,  
To every land the strains belong:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
In cheerful sound all voices raise  
And fill the world with joyful praise.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Spirit of life and love, we have gathered here in search of answers to hard questions.  
We have come in search of understanding, in search of community.  
We have come in search of hope and healing.**

**Let this be a place not only of searching, but of discovery.  
Let this be a place not only of learning, but of wisdom.  
Let this be a place not only of meeting, but of connection.  
And let this be a place where healing fosters giving and hope fosters service.**

**This is our prayer: that we may create here a circle of love,  
ever expanding, ever growing, as we seek to know you,  
the source of our being.**

Words of Assurance

Music

David Stanley York

“To Each Woman, Man, and Nation”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn #330

Shepherd's Pipes

“Deep In the Shadows of the Past”

Prayer

Invitation

“Pastorale”

+Prayer of Dedication

**There is perhaps no stronger reason for reading the Bible  
than that somewhere among all those pages  
there awaits each man and woman, whoever they are,  
the one question which is the central question.  
Here are a few of them:**

**What is a person profited to gain the whole world yet lose her soul?**

**Am I my brother's keeper?**

**What is truth?**

**How can a person be born when they are old?**

**What does someone gain by all of their toil?**

**Where shall I go from your Spirit?**

**Who is my neighbor?**

**What shall I do to find eternal life?**

**When you hear the question that is your question,  
you have already begun to hear much.**

\*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

**My story is important not because it is mine, God knows,  
but because if I tell it anything like right,  
the chances are you will recognize  
that in many ways it is also yours.  
Maybe nothing is more important  
than that we keep track, you and I,  
of these stories of who we are  
and where we have come from  
and the people we have met along the way  
because it is precisely through these stories  
in all their particularity,  
as I have long believed and often said,  
that God is known to each of us  
most powerfully and personally.**

†Closing Hymn #361

“How Firm a Foundation”

Foundation

Benediction

Postlude

“Toccata in Seven”

John Rutter  
(b. 1945)

### **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Amy Corron**.

The Call to Worship is from *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus Borg.

The Opening Prayer is by Kathy Huff.

The Unison Confession is a prayer of Sue Ayer from the *1997 Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association Worship Materials Collection*.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* by Frederick Buechner.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *Telling Secrets* by Frederick Buechner.

### **Education 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

#### Adult Education

This Sunday we will prepare to enter Black History Month with video remarks by Leonard Moore, Professor of American History and former vice-president of diversity and community engagement at the University of Texas. Professor Moore will speak on his recently published book Teaching Black History to White People.

- *Bill Kline*

#### Children & Youth Sunday School

We will have two options for Sunday School: virtual from 10-10:30, and in-person in the Huff Fellowship Hall from 10:30-11 (masks required). This way, everyone can take part in the fun.

- *Trena' Jamison*

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website:

<https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

### **Calendar**

|             |          |                                          |
|-------------|----------|------------------------------------------|
| Sun, Jan 30 | 9:00 am  | Adult Education, Zoom Meeting            |
|             | 10:00 am | Children & Youth Sunday School, Zoom     |
|             | 10:30 am | Children & Youth Sunday School, Covenant |
|             | 11:00 am | Worship in-person, Covenant              |
|             | 11:00 am | Worship live-stream                      |
| Tue. Feb 1  | 1:00 pm  | Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting   |
| Thur. Feb 3 | 10:00 am | Community Group, Zoom Meeting            |
| Thur. Feb 3 | 7:15 pm  | Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant     |
| Fri. Feb 4  | 1:00 pm  | Book Club, Zoom Meeting                  |

### **Helpful Information**

**Visitor Cards:** If you're a visitor with us, please submit a [Visitors 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](mailto:Office@covenanthouston.org).

**Newsletter:** To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to [office@covenanthouston.org](mailto:office@covenanthouston.org).

**Office Hours:** The church office is currently not open, but we are responding to emails and phone calls.

*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

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Christopher Teel, Organist

*4949 Caroline Street*

*Houston, Texas 77004*

*713-668-8830*

*[office@covenanthouston.org](mailto:office@covenanthouston.org)*

*[www.covenanthouston.org](http://www.covenanthouston.org)*