



Dove of Peace by Pablo Picasso

***A Service of Worship for
Baptism of Jesus Sunday
9 January 2022***

Begin here:

Beloved.

Is there any other word
needs saying,
any other blessing
could compare
with this name,
this knowing?

Beloved.

Comes like a mercy
to the ear
that has never
heard it.
Comes like a river
to the body
that has never
seen such grace.

Beloved.

Comes holy
to the heart
aching to be new.
Comes healing
to the soul
wanting to begin
again.

Beloved.

Keep saying it
and though it may
sound strange at first,
watch how it becomes
part of you,
how it becomes you,
as if you never
could have known
yourself
anything else,
as if you could ever
have been other
than this:

Beloved.

Jan Richardson

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Peter Hurford
(1930-2019)

“Chorale Prelude on Caswall”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #10

Winchester New

“On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry”

+Opening Sentences

Leader: Now is the time to know
That all that you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider
A lasting truce with yourself and God.

**People: Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child’s training wheels
To be laid aside
When you finally live
With veracity
And love.**

Leader: Hafiz is a divine envoy
Whom the Beloved
Has written a holy message upon.

**People: My dear, please tell me,
Why do you still
Throw sticks at your heart
And God?**

Leader: What is it in that sweet voice inside
That incites you to fear?

**People: Now is the time for the world to know
That every thought and action is sacred.
This is the time**

Leader: For you to compute the impossibility
That there is anything
But Grace.

**People: Now is the season to know
That everything you do
Is sacred.**

Scripture Lesson

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+Response:

Au Clair de la Lune

**Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
Healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,
Let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
Till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Listen to what God is saying to us:
You are my child.
You are written on the palm of my hand.
You are hidden in the shadow of my hand.
I have molded you from the secret of the earth.
I have knitted you together in your mother's womb.
You belong to me.
I am yours. You are mine.
I have called you from eternity
and you are the one who is held safe
and embraced in love from eternity to eternity.
You belong to me.
I hold you safe and I want you to know that
whatever happens to you, I am always there.
I am always there.
I am always there.
I will always be there and hold you in my embrace.

You are mine.
You are my child.
You belong to my home.
You belong to my intimate life
and I will never let you go.
I will be faithful to you.**

Words of Assurance

Music

arr. Donald P. Moore

“Deep River”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

Lobe den Herren

“Down By the Jordan”

**Down by the Jordan, a prophet named John was baptizing,
Preaching a message the people found bold and surprising:
“God will forgive! Show that you'll change how you live!
Surely God's new day is rising!”**

**There by the river, the crowd came with great expectation:
“Are you God's Chosen One, sent here to rescue our nation?”
“No!” John replied. “He who is mightier than I
Judges and offers salvation.”**

**Jesus, you went to be baptized along with the others,
Taking your place among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.
Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove!
Your work began in those waters.**

**Here in the Church, we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.
Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy! Can you hear it?
This is God's sign! This is how God says, “You're mine!”
Let's take the good news and share it!**

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Christopher Teel
(b.1971)

“Improvisation”

+Prayer of Dedication

**In joining this church, having passed through ritual waters or not,
we dedicate ourselves to being a vital part of this community.
We understand that we are God’s children,
That we are beloved.
May thoughts of baptism on this day remind us of who and whose we are.**

*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

**We honor and give thanks for the rivers and streams,
which give us the sacred water of life.
And we honor and give thanks to Spirit,
who embodies all goodness.**

+Closing Hymn #396

Caithness

“O For a Closer Walk with God”

Benediction

Postlude

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

“In Dir Ist Freude” *In Thee Is Gladness*

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **K.T. Tilford**.

The baptism banner was created by **Nancy Henry**.

The Call to Worship is from “Saint Francis and the Sow” by Galway Kinnell.

The Opening Sentences is “Now is the Time” from *The Gift: Poems by Hafiz*, translated by Daniel Ladinsky.

The Unison Confession is from *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* by Henri Nouwen.

The text of “Down By the Jordan” was written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is by **Laura Mayo**.

The Affirmation of Faith is a prayer from the Iroquois tradition.

Education 9:00 - 9:40 a.m.

Adult Education recorded education sessions will be made available on this page: [Adult Education Recordings](#).

As the Twelve Days of Christmas come to a close, let's reflect on the significance of Epiphany (which traditionally takes place on January 6). In our January 9 Adult Education meeting facilitated by Lisa Spiro, we will open up perspectives on Three Kings Day by practicing Ignatian Contemplation, exploring how different cultures celebrate Epiphany, examining the history of the Three Kings, and reflecting on a poem. Please have a pen and paper handy.
- Lisa Spiro

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: <https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

Calendar

Sun, Jan 9	9:00 am	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tue. Jan 11	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Jan 13	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Jan 13	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Fri. Jan 14	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.

Newsletter: To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to 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

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