



*A Service of Worship for the  
First Sunday of Advent  
28 November 2021*

What keeps you going isn't some fine destination  
but just the road you're on,  
and the fact that you know how to drive.  
You keep your eyes open,  
you see this damned-to-hell world you got born into,  
and you ask yourself,  
'What life can I live that will let me breathe in & out  
and love somebody or something  
and not run off screaming into the woods?

Your dreams, what you hope for and all that,  
it's not separate from your life.  
It grows right up out of it.

Barbara Kingsolver



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

J.S. Bach

“Wachet auf ruft uns die stimme” BWV 645

Call to Worship

Lighting the First Advent Candle

Response: (please remain seated)

Cradle Song

**Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,  
our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.  
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.  
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.**

\*+Opening Hymn #1

Stuttgart

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1:39-45

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Time for Children

\*+Response:

Moon Beams

**Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
Leading us on till the morning is bright.  
When God is a child there's joy in our song.  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
And none shall be afraid.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

*\*Ushers will seat latecomers*

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

Unison Confession

**This season beckons me to ask, what am I preparing for?  
What is the way that is being prepared within the wilderness of my life?  
What does it mean for my own life to become a path,  
a way of welcome for the Holy One?  
How do I give myself time to notice the ways  
that the path unfolds before me and within me?  
What are the acts of preparation that bring delight to my life?  
Whom do I ask or allow to help me prepare?**

Words of Assurance

Music

arr. John Ferguson

“Comfort, Comfort”

**“Comfort, comfort now my people; Tell of Peace!” So says our God.  
Comfort those who sit in darkness Mourning under sorrow's load.  
To God's people now proclaim That God's pardon waits for them!  
Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever!**

**For the herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,  
Calling us to true repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.  
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!  
Let the valleys rise to meet him, And the hills bow down to greet him!**

**Straight shall be what long was crooked, And the rougher places plain!  
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits his holy reign!  
For the glory of the Lord Now on earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token That God's word is never broken.**

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn #13

Bereden Väg För Herran

“Prepare the Way”

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Mark Hayes

“Brightest and Best”

+Prayer of Dedication

**Wake us then, during our season of waiting  
with the Word that has come to us again and again  
that we might learn to be more than takers of it  
choosing instead to embody it in this life  
making ourselves transparent  
for the living Word in us all  
daring to speak what we most hope  
for ourselves and our world.**

**Amen.**

+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 affirm that within each of us lies the essence of our Creator.  
We acknowledge the magnificent gift of choice,  
the knowledge of good and evil  
and the sea of gray between.  
We dedicate our being, our little lives,  
to bringing about the reign of God  
dreamed of and shown to us in the Christ.  
  
In each of us Advent begins.  
In this season we are joyful in our expectation of it!**

+Closing Hymn

“Awake, Awake to Love and Work”

Morning Song

**Awake, awake to love and work!  
The lark is in the sky;  
The fields are wet with diamond dew;  
The worlds awake to cry  
Their blessings on the Lord of life,  
As He goes meekly by.  
  
Come, let thy voice be one with theirs,  
Shout with their shout of praise;  
See how the giant sun soars up,  
Great lord of years and days!  
So let the love of Jesus come**

**And set thy soul ablaze.**

**To give and give, and give again,**

**What God hath given thee;**

**To spend thyself nor count the cost;**

**To serve right gloriously**

**The God who gave all worlds that are,**

**And all that are to be.**

Benediction

Postlude

“Toccata in C Major”

Johan Pachelbel

### **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Paul Wilson**.

Our guest organist is John Markert.

Our Advent banner was created by **Nancy Henry**.

**Nita Lindley** and **Linda Phenix** are creating and coordinating our Advent scene.

The Advent candle is lit by **Sabrina Neff** and **Shawn, Sterling, and Sebastian Alexander**.

The Call to Worship from *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief* by Jan Richardson.

The Unison Confession is from *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas* by Jan Richardson.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Jeremy Rutledge.

The Affirmation of Faith is by **John Pirtle**.

“Awake, Awake to Love and Work” text by Geoffrey A. Studdert-Kennedy.

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

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

### Adult Education Sessions for Advent

Future historians trying to understand 2021 will do well to study our Covenant Adult Education Zoom files. There they will see how we wrestled with the hard issues of the time – anti-racism, climate change, and how we thought about community. Should these historians also view the spiritual journeys we recorded (after a 100-year waiting period of course!) they will also come to understand the Covenant people who created this record. These were people, the bibliographic notes will say, who were seeking to understand God’s love and to respond to it according to their understanding of that love. During the four Sundays of Advent, November 28 and December 5, 12 and 19, we will close out our 2021 archive with four participatory sessions in which we examine the dimensions of God’s love that Advent calls us to consider - hope, peace, joy and love. Led by Bill Kline, each session will begin with a reflection on the meaning of Advent and an example of God’s love in action in the world today, after which everyone is invited to bring forward their own thoughts or examples of the theme for that Sunday. Each session will conclude with a musical selection appropriate to that theme, most likely from Handel’s *Messiah*. Everyone is invited to join our Adult Education family as we continue to contemplate God’s love by experiencing Advent together.

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: [Covenant Gatherings](#)

### Announcements

Since 1980, Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) has spread holiday cheer through Jingle Bell Express! Here’s how to help your neighbors in need have a beautiful Christmas!  
Donate New Toys & Books for Kids Age 0 -15 Years

You can:

- (1) Bring new, non-violent, unwrapped primary toys (no Nerf guns) to church by 12/5 and place them in the designated box in the Narthex. Or,
- (2) You can instead use CCSC’s WISH LIST set up through AmazonSmile called “Jingle Bell Express 2021.” This includes a selection of favorite items desired by our clients. All items can be shipped directly to CCSC preferably by December 1. Click on this link: [Jingle Bell Express 2021 WISH LIST](#)

Thank you for supporting Christian Community Service Center and the Jingle Bell Express program!

- *Missions Committee*

## Calendar

Sun. Nov 28	9:00 am	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tue. Nov 30	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Dec 2	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Dec 2	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Fri. Dec 3	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

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jodi Bash, Director of Communication

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

David Lee, Director of Music

Christopher Teel, Organist

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

*Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.*

*Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.*