



The Weight of Grief - sculpture by Celeste Roberge

***A Service of Worship for  
All Saints/All Souls Day  
7 November 2021***

Oh, to love what is lovely and will not last!

What a task

to ask

of anything, or anyone.

yet it is ours,

and not by the century or the year, but by the hours.

One fall day I heard

above me, and above the sting of the wind, a sound  
I did not know, and my look shot upward; it was

a flock of snow geese, winging it

faster than the ones we usually see,  
and, being the color of snow, catching the sun

so they were, in part at least, golden. I

held my breath

as we do

sometimes

to stop time

when something wonderful

has touched us

as with a match

which is lit, and bright,

but does not hurt

in the common way,

but delightfully,

as if delight

were the most serious thing

you ever felt.

The geese

flew on.

I have never

seen them again.

Maybe I will, someday, somewhere.

Maybe I won't.

It doesn't matter.

What matters

is that, when I saw them,

I saw them

as through the veil, secretly, joyfully, clearly.

-Mary Oliver

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Felix Mendelssohn

“O Rest In the Lord”

Call to Worship

\*+Opening Hymn #483

Mit Freueden Zart

“Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above”

+Opening Sentences

**When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid, promised walks never taken.**

**And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.**

*\*Ushers will seat latecomers*

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Time for Children

\*+Response:

New England

*Throughout the whole creation I see God's loving care  
For everyone in every land, God's children everywhere.  
Wherever I may wander, Wherever I may be,  
I'm certain of my Maker's love; God's care is over me.*

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**God of blessings,  
We come thirsty for you,  
Lonely for you,  
Hoping for you.  
Give us rivers in the wilderness-places of our hearts,  
Tenderness for memories of sadness,  
Strength for the possibility of new beginnings  
Choose us this day, gentle God,  
And we shall be chosen.  
Form our hearts to your love and  
Spring forth in us an amazing future.  
Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Jody W. Lindh

“Behold, God Is My Salvation”

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid;  
for the Lord God is my strength and my song,  
and has become my salvation.  
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon God's name;  
Make known God's deeds among the nations,  
Proclaim that God's name is exalted!  
Sing praises to the Lord, for God has done gloriously;  
Let this be known in all the earth!

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

“I Sing a Song of the Saints of God”

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Charles Hubert H. Parry

“Elegy”

+Prayer of Dedication

**Let the gifts of courage, wisdom, and thanksgiving  
come to each of us today and in the days to come.  
Courage to face the reality of death.  
Wisdom to speak openly and honestly of loss.  
And thanksgiving for the lives of those we love.**

+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

**Hope nonetheless.  
Hope despite.  
Hope regardless.  
Hope still.**

**Hope where we had ceased to hope.  
Hope amid what threatens hope.  
Hope with those who feed our hope.  
Hope beyond what we had hoped.**

**Hope that draws us past our limits.  
Hope that defies expectations.  
Hope that questions what we have known.  
Hope that makes a way where there is none.**

**Hope that takes us past our fear.  
Hope that calls us into life.  
Hope that holds us beyond death.  
Hope that blesses those to come.**

“For All the Saints”

Unison Benediction

**For those who walked with us,  
this is a prayer.**

**For those who have gone ahead,  
this is a blessing.**

**For those  
who touched and tended us,  
who lingered with us  
while they lived,  
this is a thanksgiving.**

**For those  
who journey still with us  
in the shadows of awareness,  
in the crevices of memory,  
in the landscape of our dreams,  
this is a benediction.**

Postlude

“In Nomine Domine” *from Organbook II*

Ned Rorem

**Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Joyce Courtois**.

The Call to Worship is from *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People* by Nadia Bolz-Weber.

The Opening Prayer is from “Ailey, Baldwin, Floyd, Killens and Mayfield” by Maya Angelou. **Ann Christensen** gives the Time for Children.

The Unison Confession is from *An Improbable Gift of Blessing: Prayers and Affirmations to Nurture the Spirit*, by Maren C. Tirabassi and Joan Jordan Grant.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from *In Memoriam* by Edward Searl.

The Affirmation of Faith is “Rough Translations” by Jan Richardson.

The Unison Benediction is from *In Wisdom’s Path* by Jan Richardson.

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

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

The adult education class for Sunday, November 7, will be: [Remembering the Holocaust and Visiting the Holocaust Museum](#). This session will feature excerpts from oral history video interview with Holocaust survivors Edith and Josef Minberg, Houston residents who were among the founders and major benefactors of Holocaust Museum Houston, which includes a major exhibition gallery bearing their name. Mr. Minberg died in 2003, but Mrs. Minberg, 97, still in good health and of sharp mind, lives in Lamar Tower, where Bill and Patricia Martin have become acquainted with her. After the worship service and a break of 20-30 minutes for [self-provided lunch](#) (sandwich, thermos of soup, energy bars, etc.) in Huff Hall, outdoors, or elsewhere, those who choose to can drive or walk to the Holocaust Museum at 5401 Caroline, just a bit over four blocks south of Covenant. Parking is available for \$8 for 1-4 hours. If weather and health permit, you may want to remain parked at the church facilities and take the short walk.

We also recommend that you watch the video of [Adam Burke's quite interesting and enjoyable account](#) of the spiritual journey that brought him to Covenant.

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

### Announcements

#### **Sunday schedule for this Sunday:**

Adult Education (Zoom) 9am  
Worship in-person (Covenant) 11am  
Worship live-stream 11am

### Calendar

Sun. Nov 7	9:00 am	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tues. Nov 9	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab (Zoom)
Thur. Nov 11	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Nov 11	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Thur. Nov 11	8:00 pm	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Nov 12	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.*