



*A Service of Worship for  
Transfiguration Sunday  
11 February 2024*

Learning to pray...is learning to listen  
with the mind and heart—making oneself attentive  
to each exquisite detail of the world.

It is a fearsome, exhilarating task,  
best suited to solitude and silence...

For the prayerful listener,  
the world becomes the sublime scripture,  
full of stories of structure and chaos,  
law and chance, complexification and decay,  
including the story of the human person  
in whom the universe becomes conscious of itself.  
All of my life has been a relearning to pray...

Chet Raymo

Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God.

Maya Angelou



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

\*Prelude

Mark Fax  
(1911-1974)

“If Thou But Trust In God to Guide Thee”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn

Beach Spring

“We Have Come at Christ’s Own Bidding”

**We have come at Christ’s own bidding  
to this high and holy place,  
where we wait with hope and longing  
for some token of God’s grace.  
Here we pray for new assurance  
that our faith is not in vain,  
searching like those first disciples  
for a sign both clear and plain.**

**Light breaks through our clouds and shadows;  
splendor bathes the flesh-joined Word;  
Moses and Elijah marvel  
as the heavenly voice is heard.  
Eyes and hearts behold with wonder  
how the law and prophets meet:  
Christ, with garments drenched in brightness,  
stands transfigured and complete.**

**Strengthened by this glimpse of glory,  
fearful lest our faith decline,  
we like Peter find it tempting  
to remain and build a shrine.**

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

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

**But true worship gives us courage  
to proclaim what we profess,  
that our daily lives may prove us  
people of the God we bless.**

**+Opening Prayer**

**In this familiar place, listen:  
to the sounds of breathing, creaking chairs,  
shuffling feet, clearing throats, and sighing all around  
Know that each breath, movement, the glance  
meant for you or intercepted  
holds a life within it.**

**These are signs  
that we choose to be in this company  
have things to say to each other  
things not yet said but in each other's presence still  
trembling behind our heart's doors  
these doors closed but unlocked  
each silent thing waiting  
on the threshold between knowing and unknowing,  
between being hidden and being known.**

**Find the silence among these people  
and listen to it all – breathing, sighs,  
movement, holding back –  
hear the tears that have not yet reached their eyes  
perhaps they are your own  
hear also the laughter building deep where joy abides  
despite everything.  
Listen: rejoice. And say Amen.**

**Invitation**

**Scripture Lesson**

**Mark 9:2-9**

**These are our sacred stories.  
Thanks be to God.**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

Time for Children

+Response:

Tallis' Canon

***Go with us, Lord, and guide the way  
Through this and every coming day,  
That in Your Spirit strong and true  
Our lives may be our gift to You.***

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**For times when we have assumed  
that we, and we alone, had the right answers,  
certain of our certainty,  
certain of their error,  
talking, not listening, speaking, not hearing,  
forgive us.**

**For times when we have been too timid  
to speak a word of truth we felt,  
afraid of not being heard,  
afraid of being heard,  
listening, not speaking, hearing but silent,  
forgive us.**

**If ever we forget  
that You are present among us,  
in our words,  
in their words,  
in the words we read,  
in the stories we tell,  
and ours is but the task of discovery,  
forgive us and make us free. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

## “Jesus On the Mountain Peak”

*Jesus, on the mountain peak, stands alone in glory blazing.  
Let us, if we dare to speak, join the saints and angels praising:*

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*Trembling at his feet we saw Moses and Elijah speaking.  
All the Prophets and the Law shout through them their joyful greeting!*

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*Swift the cloud of glory came, God, proclaiming in its thunder,  
Jesus as the son by name! Nations, cry aloud in wonder:*

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*Jesus is the chosen One, living hope of every nation,  
hear and heed him, everyone; sing, with earth and all creation,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn

Bunessan

## “Can We See Jesus?”

**Can we see Jesus high on the mountain  
Brighter than sunlight, whiter than white?  
Yes. We see Jesus unmasking for us  
God in such wonder, boundless in light.**

**Can we see Jesus eating with outcasts,  
Touching the lepers, friends with the poor?  
Yes. We see Jesus unmasking for us  
God as compassion, gracious and more.**

**Can we see Jesus dying so slowly  
Speaking no malice with his last breath?  
Yes. We see Jesus unmasking for us  
God as forgiveness in life and death.**

**I can see Jesus on my faith journey  
Dazzling charisma, humble and meek.  
I can see Jesus God’s revelation,  
Close and inviting each time I seek.**

Prayer

Offering  
Offertory

Margaretha Christina de Jong  
(b. 1961)

“Canzonetta”

+Prayer of Dedication

**I vow to look with the eyes of love and a heart  
of understanding.  
I vow to listen with a clear mind and ears  
of compassion,  
bringing peace and joy into the lives of others  
to lighten and alleviate the suffering of living beings.  
I am aware that ignorance and wrong perceptions  
can turn this world into a fiery hell.  
I vow to walk always upon the path of  
transformation,  
producing understanding and loving kindness.  
I will be able to cultivate a garden of awakening.**

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

**Our shared search is part of  
the human condition.  
Some of us know what we seek  
and others stumble along unsure.  
Yet we all come to this place  
with a yearning—**

**to find or make meaning,  
to live conscious lives,  
to grow in kindness,  
to renew and remake the world  
In the image of love.**

**Today we affirm not that we are all the same  
or that we know exactly what we are doing  
but that we are resolved  
to ask, seek, and knock together.**

**Today we affirm that whatever God is  
is revealed to us slowly,  
In increments,  
patches and scraps of light  
pricking the shadows  
glimpsed only by the wide-eyed  
and the curious.**

<sup>+</sup>Closing Hymn #408

Germany

“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”

**Where cross the crowded ways of life,  
where sound the cries of race and clan,  
Above the noise of selfish strife,  
we hear thy voice, O son of man.**

**In haunts of wretchedness and need,  
on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,  
From paths where hide the lures of greed,  
we catch the vision of thy tears.**

**From tender childhood’s helplessness,  
from human grief and burdened toil,  
From famished souls, from sorrow’s stress,  
thy heart has never known recoil.**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*



**The cup of water given for thee still holds  
the freshness of thy grace;  
Yet long these multitudes to see  
the sweet compassion of thy face.**

**O master, from the mountainside,  
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;  
Among these restless throngs abide,  
O tread the city's streets again.**

**Till all the world shall learn thy love,  
and follow where thy feet have trod;  
Till glorious from thy heaven above  
shall come the city of our God.**

Benediction

\*Postlude

Domenico Zipoli  
(1688-1726)

“Toccata”

*\*Please hold silence and remain seated during the prelude  
+Please stand in body or spirit*

## **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Cheenu Virdi**.

The guest proclaimer is **Karen Kline**.

The Call to Worship is adapted from “The Love of Solitude” by Thomas Merton in *Thomas Merton, Spiritual Master: The Essential Writings*, edited by Lawrence Cunningham.

The text of “We Have Come at Christ’s Own Bidding” is by Carl P. Daw.

The Opening Prayer is “Prayer for Those Gathered in Worship” by Barbara Pescan.

The Unison Confession is by **Jim Avera**.

The text of “Can We See Jesus?” is by George Stuart.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *The Energy of Prayer: How to Deepen Your Spiritual Practice* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Jeremy Rutledge.

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

Adult Education - We continue our marking Evolution Weekend as a way of emphasizing the compatibility of religion and science. **Bruce Yaeger** will explain what really occurred during and after the famous 1925 Scopes “Monkey” trial over the teaching of evolution. His presentation is titled “**The Jail and Torches that Never Were: Debunking the Scopes-trial Myth.**” Many people have heard of the Scopes trial but know mostly falsehoods about it (such as perpetuated by the movie *Inherit the Wind*). Getting a true picture of the trial can help us understand how we in the U.S. got to where we are today. Bruce Yaeger, a teacher for over 35 years, is the author of two books, including *Wrestling Brothers: Rethinking Religion-Science Relationships*.

- Bruce Yaeger

## **Children & Youth Education -**

Children's Lesson

Title: Nineteen Dangerous Trips

Lesson: Willpower

Youth Lesson

Scripture: 2 Kings 2:1-12

- Trena' Jamison

## **Announcements**

### **Ash Wednesday, February 14**

#### **12PM - 12:30PM at Rothko Chapel & 7:30PM at Covenant**

Noon - 12:30 PM - Rothko Chapel: Join us for an opportunity for reflection. Jacy Grannis will play viola in this meditative space. All are welcome.

7:30 PM - Covenant Church: We will share in ashes, music, and quiet reflection on life and mortality in this special service. Childcare is available.

### **Inauguration of Covenant's Year of Climate Action Celebration**

#### **Sunday, February 18, 12PM - 2:30PM**

You are invited to a celebration and inauguration of Covenant's Year of Climate Action on February 18, 12-2:30PM in the Huff Fellowship Hall to feature all things fostering our climate action: planet-friendly food, scintillating questions, a thought-provoking speaker, heartening music, and last-but-not-least, the good company of fellow pilgrims in this year-long journey. Sign up now, either online (please see newsletter) or in the narthex. Please sign up so we know how many to plan for. If you want to contribute a vegetarian dish, please indicate that on the sign-up. This event is co-sponsored by the social justice working group and the Diaconate. Please see Kathleen Cook or Lisa Spiro for questions.

## **Children and Youth Announcements**

### **Events**

- **February 25: CHILDREN & YOUTH AUCTION**
  - **Donation and Food list (please see newsletter for link)**
- **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. Feb 11	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
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary/Children's Area
	10:20am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	10:40am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary
	11:00am	Worship in-person, Sanctuary and via live-stream, YouTube
	12:00pm	All Church Committee Meetings, Huff Fellowship Hall
Tue. Feb 13	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thurs. Feb 15	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom

## **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](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 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.*