



*A Service of Worship for
13 September 2020*

Let no one, however, be deceived.

This society can tell the oppressed that they're making it all up,
that their conditions are the consequences of their own choices,
that they don't have it so bad,
that they're being divisive,
that they should just shut up — and it may work.

But God will always be hovering in the margins, listening.

God does not shut down those who cry out in protest.

God doesn't tell them to be patient because change takes a while.

Doesn't tell them that they'll attract more flies
with honey than with vinegar — that they should be careful to not offend their oppressors
as they express their pain, lest they “hurt their own cause.”

God doesn't tell them that all Egyptians aren't bad (#NotAllEgyptians).

God doesn't accuse them of making excuses or blaming others for their problems.

Doesn't remind them of how generous Egypt was
to grant their ancestors asylum in the first place.

Doesn't tell them how much worse
they could have it someplace else.

*The text says that when God hears the margin-dwellers lament their social pain,
that God hears and acts.*

Whatever we say the real issue is in this story,
it must take into account that **the scriptures consistently convey that God
is livid when the powerful dominate the powerless.**

God will always take up their cause.

God will always advocate for them.

God will always be found among them.

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Dietrich Buxtehude

“We Pray Now to the Holy Spirit”

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

**A journey requires not only an end, a goal,
but also the ability to keep at it - constancy.
Travelers, in the midst of the vicissitudes of the journey,
learn to trust one another when the going is rough.
If we are to be true to the quest,
to keep a demanding goal before ourselves,
we must be people who are ready to be surprised.**

Scripture Lesson

Exodus 14:10-15:21

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

Time for Children

+Response:

Hymn to Joy

***Joyful, Joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day.***

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**God of compassion,
we acknowledge the times
we have lived too long
with the words that others have put
into our mouths,
with the pain they have written
onto our bodies,
with the terror they have burned
into our hearts,
with the shame they have inscribed
onto our souls.**

**We know the times we have clung
to sackcloth not of our making,
when we have lived
clothed in weariness,
cloaked with anger,
and enshrouded by sorrow.**

**We grieve the occasions
when we have lived with alienation
rather than association,
when we have sought isolation
rather than consolation,
when our wounds within
have shut others out.**

**We confess our fear of the dark
and our uncertainty of the light.
Yet you have placed within us, God,
a longing for survival,
a hunger for your wholeness,
a yearning for your comfort,
and a hope for all our healing.**

**Bless our mouths
to name our wounds,
that we may not fear them;**

**our bodies,
that we may cherish them;
our hearts, that we may delight
in their longings,
and our souls, that we may trust
the wisdom of the stories they hold.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Alan Hovanes

“From the End of the Earth”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**Let us be artisans,
artisans of hope,
artisans of wonder,
working with the clay of human longing—
of our capacities for greed and indifference,
for exclusion and fear,
as well as our capacities for generosity,
courage, forgiveness, and resilience.**

**As artisans, let us craft together
flourishing communities
of honesty, inclusion, self-critique, and hope.**

*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

**Theology is an “earthly” affair
in the best sense of that word:
it helps people to live rightly,**

**appropriately, on the earth,
in our home.**

**It is concerned with “right relations,”
relations with God, neighbor and self,
but now the context has broadened
to include what has dropped out
of the picture—
the oppressed neighbors,
the other creatures
and the earth that supports us all.**

**We now know that “all that is”
is vaster, more complex,
more awesome, more interdependent
than any other people has ever known.**

**The new theologies that emerge
have the opportunity
to view divine transcendence
in deeper and more intimate ways
than ever before.**

**They also have the obligation
to understand our special responsibility
for the planet’s well being.**

Benediction

Postlude

“Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

J. S. Bach

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Linda Phenix**.

The Call to Worship is by Andre Henry from “Exodus (pt. 4): This is How We’ll Do It.”

The Opening Sentences are by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon.

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” is led by The Covenant Singers.

The Unison Confession is “Prayer of Confession” by Jan Richardson, from *In Wisdom’s Path*.

“From the End of the Earth” is sung by The Covenant Singers; **David Lee** conducting; from 2/1/2105.

The Prayer of Dedication is from “Artisans of Hope, Artisans of Wonder” by Sharon Welch in *Theology that Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God*, edited by Darby Kathleen Ray.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from “An Earthly Theological Agenda” by Sallie McFague in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, edited by Mary Heather MacKinnon and Moni McIntyre.

Education 10:00 - 10:40 a.m.

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

On September 13 Adult Education will be on “Thinking Theologically,” led by Jackie Rundstein and Ben Ball. These are two lessons from the curriculum of Living the Questions: <https://livingthequestions.com/>. Please see the Online Gatherings page for the Session Guide and other materials.

We will start by viewing a 20-minute DVD by contributors including such luminaries as John Spong, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, and Helen Prejean. This will be followed by a guided conversation responding to their presentations. We will start promptly at 10AM via Zoom and conclude in plenty of time for the participants to join the virtual coffee time at 11AM.

Transcripts are available which will be helpful in following the DVD presentations. These materials, together with bios of the contributors will be on the Online Gatherings page or from Ben at benball@alum.mit.edu. The Zoom log-in details as well as the study materials are located on our [Online Gatherings page](#). Contact Susan Wegner susan@tswegner.net or Ben with any questions.

- Ben Ball & Susan Wegner

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

Announcements

Sundays, September 20 and 27, we will be conducting worship a little different on these days. Please log into Zoom at 10:00 AM those two Sundays to worship together. When worship ends we will transition directly to coffee time using Zoom. For coffee time will use Zoom breakout rooms for small group discussions. While we hope to see you in worship these two Sundays, you will still be able to access the worship website at any time to watch individual videos of each element of worship or the whole worship service video. We will not have facebook coffee time these two Sundays. Zoom details will be on the Online Gatherings page:

<https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>. This link will also be provided in the Sunday email and on the worship page. A password will be required. If you need help with your password, please email office@covenanthouston.org.

Sunday schedule for September 20 and 27:

9:00 - Adult Education with Zoom

10:00 - Worship together with Zoom

11:00 - Transition from worship to coffee time with Zoom

Covenant will be holding smaller groups on Zoom. We will also hold virtual coffee time each Sunday at 11am on Facebook.

Calendar

Sun. Sept 13	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education via Zoom
	11:00 a.m.	Facebook Live coffee time
Mon. Sept 14	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Sept 16	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Sept 17	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Sept 17	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Sept 18	1:00 p.m.	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom

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
Laura Mayo, Senior Minister
Jodi Bash, Director of Children & Youth
Director of Communication
Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita
David Lee, Interim Director of Music
Patrick Parker, Organist
Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

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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.