



*A Service of Worship for
27 September 2020*

A spirituality of work
is based on a heightened sense of sacramentality,
of the idea that everything that is,
is holy and that our hands consecrate it to the service of God.

When we grow radishes in a small container
in a city apartment,
we participate in creation.

When we sweep the street in front of a house
in the dirtiest city in the country,
we bring new order to the universe.

When we repair what has been broken or give away
what we have earned that is above and beyond our own sustenance,
we stoop down and scoop up the earth
and breathe into it new life again,
as God did one morning in time
only to watch it unfold and unfold and unfold through the ages.

Joan Chittister

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

“Andante Grazioso” from Sonata in A Major

Call to Worship

†Opening Prayer

**In this uncertain time,
When the past has fled, unasked, away,
And there is nothing left to do but wait,
God, shelter us.**

**Be our surrounding darkness;
Be our fertile soil
Out of which hope springs
In due time.**

**In uncertain times,
Help us to greet the dawn
And labor on, love on,
In faith awaiting your purpose
Hid in you
Waiting to be born
In due time.**

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 21:23-32

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

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

**Who is my neighbor?
The one who needs me.
This is true religion: to take care
of those who are in need.
And yet, we (you and I
and the rest of the American church),
are not known for our love.
No - we are known for our judgmental,
Close-minded, pretentious fears.
This is our shame!**

**My friends, we cannot continue
only loving the ones who look like us,
who talk like us,
who believe what we believe,
and act like we act.
We must reach across the aisle with love
for the very people we disagree with.
Love your enemy and pray
for those who persecute you.
Let us live a life worthy
of the life-giving love we have been given.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Frank Bridge

“Spring Song”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

“Awake, Awake, to Love and Work”

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**What good is it, my brothers and sisters,
if you say you have faith but do not have works?
Can faith save you?
If a brother or sister is naked
and lacks daily food,
and one of you says to them,
“Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,”
and yet you do not supply
their bodily needs,
what is the good of that?
So faith by itself,
if it has no works, is dead.**

*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

**Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere,
its temple, all space;
its shrine, the good heart;
its creed, all truth;
its ritual, works of love;
its profession of faith, divine living.**

Benediction

Postlude

Felix Mendelssohn

“Andante Grazioso” from Songs Without Words

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Jim Wallace**.

The Call to Worship is "Good Workers" by Gary Johnson.

The Opening Prayer is adapted from *Touch Holiness*, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi.

"Spring Song" is played by **Susan Wegner**, cello; Patrick Parker, piano.

The Unison Confession is from "An Open Letter To The American Church" by Jon Foreman.

"Awake, Awake, to Love and Work" is led by The Covenant Singers.

The Prayer of Dedication is James 2:14-17.

The Affirmation of Faith is from Theodore Parker, as reprinted in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings*, edited by Helen Pickett.

More About Selected Authors from Today:

Sister Joan D. Chittister, O.S.B., is an American Benedictine nun, theologian, author, and speaker. She has served as Benedictine prioress and Benedictine federation president, president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and co-chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women.

Jon Foreman is the lead singer and guitarist of the Grammy Award winning rock band Switchfoot.

Theodore Parker was born August 24, 1810 in Lexington, Massachusetts, U.S. and died May 10, 1860 in Florence, Italy. He was an American Unitarian theologian, pastor, scholar, and social reformer who was active in the antislavery movement.

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

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

On September 27 at 9AM Bob Tucker will lead Adult Education with his talk titled: **A Sibling Rivalry**. The status of science has shifted in our society. Nowhere is this more clearly seen today than in our President's irritable relationship with the primary governmental institutes of health. There is a sizable body of Americans who mirror his views. Yet, the erosion of the esteem in which science was held has been building over time, and nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the history of that battered sibling, religion.

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

Announcements

Sundays, September 27, we will be conducting worship a little different on these days. Please log into Zoom at 10:00 AM to worship together. When worship ends we will transition directly to coffee time using Zoom. For coffee time we 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 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 27	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education via Zoom
	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service via Zoom
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time via Zoom
Mon. Sept 28	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Sept 30	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Oct. 1	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Oct. 1	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Oct. 2	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

4949 Caroline Street

Houston, Texas 77004

713-668-8830

office@covenanthouston.org

www.covenanthouston.org

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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.