



*A Service of Worship for
Reformation Sunday
25 October 2020*

“A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.”

“You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say.”

“If you preach the gospel in all its aspects with the exception of the issues that deal specifically with your time, you are not preaching the Gospel at all.”

Martin Luther

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

"Air" from Suite No. 3

Call to Worship

†Opening Sentences

**I wonder if we could take this day
for the prayer that it is
and give ourselves to it fully**

**our time,
our energy,
and our money**

**offered in the name
of what is really sacred to us.**

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 90 and John 3:1-8

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

**In times of struggle, God,
you call us to give support;
in times of uncertainty,
you call us to offer a clear vision;
in times of despair,
you call us to speak a word of hope.**

**Bless the good in all we give, and bless our gifts of money,
that they may bring closer your dream of justice and peace. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Frank Bridge

"Meditation"

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

Aurelia

"O Christ the Great Foundation"

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**Source of all being,
we turn to You as did our people in ancient days.
They beheld You in the stars,
they felt You in their hearts,
they sought You in their lives.**

**Now their quest is ours.
Help us, O God, to see the wonder of being.
Give us courage to search for truth.
Teach us the path to a better life.
So shall we, by our lives and labors,
bring nearer to realization the great hope inherited from ages past,
for a world transformed by liberty, justice, and peace.**

*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

**As every reader knows, the Gospels are overwhelmingly concerned
with the conduct of human life, of life in the human commonwealth.
Jesus is asking his followers to see that the way
to a more abundant life is the way of love.**

**We are to love one another, and this love is to be more comprehensive
than our love for family and friends and tribe and nation.**

**This is to be a practical love; it is to be practiced; here and now.
Love evidently is not just a feeling but is indistinguishable
from the willingness to help, to be useful to one another.**

**The way of love is indistinguishable, moreover, from the way of freedom.
We don't need much imagination to imagine
that to be free of hatred, of enmity, of the endless
and hopeless effort to oppose violence with violence,
would be to have life more abundantly.**

Benediction

Postlude

"Chaconne in F minor"

Johann Pachelbel

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Brooke Longoria**.

Our guest proclaimer today is the Rev. Dr. James Forbes. He is the Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church, an interdenominational church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, New York City. He was the first African American minister to lead this multicultural congregation, and served it for 18 years. We join with other Alliance of Baptists churches around our country in hearing from Rev. Dr. Forbes this morning.

The Call to Worship is “An Invitation to Reformation” written by Rev. Aretha R. Flucker.

The Opening Sentences are by Jeremy Rutledge.

The Unison Confession is from *Worship for All Seasons*, edited by Thomas Harding.

“Meditation” is played by **Susan Wegner**, cello; Patrick Parker, organ.

“O Christ the Great Foundation” is led by The Covenant Singers, Patrick Parker, organ

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayer Book*, the 1975 Prayer Book of the Central Conference of Reformed Rabbis.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from “Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ’s Teachings About Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness” by Wendell Berry.

The postlude is played by Patrick Parker, organ.

More About Selected Authors from Today:

[Aretha R. Flucker](#) is the Director of Community and Spiritual Life at Brite Divinity School and serves on the Board of Directors of the Alliance. Laura and Aretha have served together on an Alliance committee.

[Rev. Dr. James Forbes](#), our guest proclaimer, is the Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church, an interdenominational church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, New York City. He was the first African American minister to lead this multicultural congregation, and served it for 18 years. We join with other Alliance of Baptists churches around our country in hearing from Rev. Dr. Forbes this morning.

[Wendell Berry](#) is an American novelist, poet, essayist, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer. He calls himself an eccentric Christian.

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, October 25, will feature a walk by Mark P. Jones, Ph.D., fellow in political science at the Baker Institute and the Joseph D. Jamail Professor in the Department of Political Science at Rice University. Professor Jones is a frequent commentator in local, state, national and international media on government, politics and public policy.

The presentation will cover the race for the White House and battle for control of the U.S. Senate at the federal level. At the state level, the focus will be on the Democratic effort to flip the Texas House as well as what to watch at the congressional level, from the U.S. Senate contest to the most competitive U.S. House races.

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website:

<https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

Announcements

Sunday schedule for October 25:

9:00 - Adult Education with Zoom

10:00 - Worship via videos on the worship website

11:00 - Gather together for 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. Oct 25	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education via Zoom
	11:00 a.m.	Facebook Live coffee time
Mon. Oct 26	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Oct 28	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Oct 29	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Oct 29	7:00 p.m.	Business Meeting to Discuss and Vote on the 2021 Budget, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Oct 29	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Oct 30	1:00 p.m.	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Sat. Oct 31	2:30 p.m.	Halloween Costume Contest, Zoom (for all kids up to 8th grade)

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 30.07, 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.