



*A Service of Worship for  
8 November 2020*

"What message have you for young people?"  
asked Carl Stern of NBC  
in concluding a television interview  
with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel  
shortly before his death.  
Rabbi Heschel replied, ". . .

Let them remember that there is a meaning beyond absurdity.

Let them be sure that every deed counts,  
that every word has power,  
and that we all can do our share  
to redeem the world in spite of all absurdities  
and all frustrations  
and all disappointments.

And above all, [let them] remember . . .  
to build a life as if it were a work of art."

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Ned Rorem

"There Is a Spirit That Delights to Do No Evil"

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

**Yes, Jesus,  
I want to be on your right side or your best side,  
not for any selfish reason.  
I want to be on your right or your best side,  
not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition,  
but I just want to be there in love and justice  
and in truth and in commitment to others,  
so that we can make of this old world  
a new one.**

Scripture Lesson

Genesis 13, Zechariah 7, Philippians 4

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

**Gentle God, we bring before you our sinful selves  
And our need for reconciliation with others.  
We have done deeds we deeply regret.**

**We have spoken words that have hurt others.  
We have trapped ourselves in false expectations, and  
we have accepted transient goods  
to satisfy our deepest longings.  
We have failed to reach out hand and heart to others in need.  
We have not believed in ourselves.  
Call us to salvation, God, and help us be at peace with all your children.  
Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

René Clausen

"Set Me as a Seal"

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

†Prayer of Dedication

**Break up the hard-packed soil of our nation, God,  
and let there be shoots of new life.  
Deliver us from the narrow ways that speak of “we” and “they,”  
that rest upon ignorance or apathy.  
Deliver us from silence when faithful people must speak out,  
when old truths need repeating and division may be bridged by insight.  
Deliver us from the noise of too much busyness with too little purpose,  
from pleasure seeking that is self-centered rather than renewing,  
from wealth while much of the world is impoverished.  
Prepare us for the peace that grows out of reconciliation,  
for the change that matters and is constructive, and  
for the service that binds us into human community. Amen.**

\*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

**The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts.  
It is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fragment  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.**

**We cannot do everything,  
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference  
between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.**

Benediction

Postlude

Josef Rheinberger

"Andante" from Sonata No. 1 in C Minor

### **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Patricia Martin**.

The guest proclaimer is **Bill Martin**.

The prelude is played by Patrick Parker, organ.

The Call to Worship is by Jeremy Rutledge.

The Opening Sentences are from Martin Luther King's sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James Washington.

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

"Set Me as a Seal" sung by The Covenant Singers, Fran Avera, directing; from April 29, 2019.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Worship for All Seasons*.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Oscar Romero, assassinated archbishop of El Salvador.

The postlude is played by Patrick Parker, organ.

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

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

Travis Hicks and Ginger Clarkson have been conducting meditation sessions as a team at Covenant (pre-COVID era) and now virtually for the past year. This Sunday in Adult Education Travis will discuss the complimentary heart practices such as metta or loving-kindness meditation. The discussion will include ways in which this practice balances and compliments vipassana practice and its historical origins. There will be an opportunity and invitation to try a guided meditation. Login details are on the Online Gathering page.

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 November 8:**

- 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. Nov. 8	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education via Zoom
	11:00 a.m.	Facebook Live coffee time
Wed. Nov. 11	5:00 p.m.	Kids' Corner, Zoom Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Nov. 12	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Nov. 12	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, 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 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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