



*A Service of Worship for  
31 January 2021*

The denunciation of injustice  
implies the rejection  
of the use of Christianity  
to legitimize the established order.

Gustavo Gutiérrez

The cowardice that keeps silent  
in the face of the sufferings of the poor  
and that offers any number of adroit justifications  
represents an especially serious failure of Christians.

Gustavo Gutiérrez

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

J.S. Bach

“Preludium” from Partita No. 1

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

**Hope has two beautiful daughters.  
Their names are anger and courage;  
anger at the way things are,  
and courage to see that they  
do not remain the way they are.**

Scripture Lesson

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

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

**Eternal God,**

**Forgive us when we separate ourselves from you--  
when we pay attention to our agenda  
and overlook someone who is trying to speak to us,  
when we laud the best examples of your love--  
Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jesus the Christ,  
and we forget  
that our lives matter.**

**Forgive us, Gracious God,  
when we, at Covenant,  
even as we gather together,  
forget to think, to hope, past ourselves.  
Encourage us, God  
to be attentive to your word  
that is spoken in the lives around us,  
to dare to involve ourselves  
in some desire greater than ourselves. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

“A Gaelic Blessing”

John Rutter

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

“Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice”

Aberystwyth

Prayer

Invitation

†Prayer of Dedication

**I know that God acts.  
But there is no way for God to act if we,  
And other created beings,  
Are unwilling or unable to give substance  
To God's yearnings, God's energies, God's will.  
We must discern the gifts God gives us,  
Accept them, employ them, pass them along.  
Without our active cooperation,**

**God's abundance remains.  
Forever untapped.**

\*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

**We have important work.  
But none of us can do this work alone.  
As much as we need constructive self-examination  
and critical dialogue, we need each other.**

**We may never come to think alike  
or to act alike. I hope not.  
But by participating in each other's faith journeys,  
by reaching out to each other and sharing in the struggles  
to name and claim our theologies,  
we can strengthen our public prophetic voice  
and deepen our sense of community  
and our commitment to a shared faith tradition.**

Benediction

Postlude

Marc Antoine Charpentier

“Te Deum”

Litany of Commissioning the Deacons - we will participate in the ordination and commissioning of the deacons during our Zoom at 11:00 AM

### **Litany of Commissioning for the 2021 Diaconate**

**Leader:** Today we call this group to be our spiritual leaders in the coming year. Let us say why we have called them.

**Community:** Our call to each of you – Michelle Bennack, Matt Bennett, Joyce Courtois, Amy Cuellar, Charity Grannis, Jane Cravens, Jay Hooker, Bill Howze, Jane Ann Leeves, Tonya McKinny, John Preston, Sally Ridgway, Ann Stout, and Dale Thomas - is an affirmation of your gifts and an expression of our gratitude and respect for you. We do not call you to be different people. We call you because of who you are - generous with your gifts, aware of our needs.

**Leader:** What do we ask of these spiritual leaders?

**Community:** We ask you to guide us on our journey together: to be a step or two ahead; to inspire us to recognize and share our own gifts; to encourage and comfort us when things go wrong and celebrate with us when things are right. While we expect you to do certain tasks, we also ask that you give free rein to your imagination, insight, compassion and your capacity to love. In this spirit, together our community can deepen and grow.

**Leader:** Do you – Michelle, Matt, Joyce, Amy, Charity, Jane, Jay, Bill, Jane Ann, Tonya, John, Sally, Ann, and Dale - accept the call you have heard here today?

**Deacons:** We do. We stand before you committed to exercise our gifts with courage and compassion.

**Leader:** What do you ask of us?

**Deacons:** We ask you to be courageous and compassionate; to challenge and stretch us. We ask you to join with us on this sacred journey of exploration and discovery.

**All:** Let us go forth together in love, sharing joys and sorrows, triumphs and tragedy, seeking God's peace and justice both within and without.

## **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Beverly Rodgers**.

The prelude is played by **Karen Kline**, piano.

The Call to Worship is by Cornel West.

The Opening Sentences are from St. Augustine

The Unison Confession is by **Jeannie Gambill**.

“A Gaelic Blessing” is sung by The Covenant Singers, **Fran Avera**, directing, from September 24, 2017

The Prayer of Dedication is from *The Active Life* by Parker Palmer.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *Faith without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Paul Rasor.

The postlude is played by Carl McAliley, organ.

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

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

This Sunday Rebecca Spears will lead a discussion on poetry.

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 this Sunday:**

9:00 - Adult Education with Zoom

10:00 - Worship via videos on the worship website

11:00 - Gather together for Deacon Ordination and coffee time with Zoom

### **Deacon Ordination and Commissioning**

This Sunday we will participate in the ritual of ordination in a new way. We will ordain new deacons Jane Cravens, Jane Ann Leeves, and Ann Stout on our Sunday morning Zoom gathering. We will begin our Zoom coffee time at 11 with the ordination and then the commissioning of our deacons. There are multiple ways to participate: 1. You can email a blessing to these three deacons. Their email addresses are Jane Cravens (rcrav1144@aol.com), Jane Ann Leeves (jaleeves@sbcglobal.net), and Ann Stout (annustout@gmail.com); 2. You can use chat to send a blessing to each of these deacons in real time on Zoom (see below for further instructions on doing this); 3. You can participate in the “laying on of hands” which we will all do on Zoom. There will also be a litany which will be read by preselected people. Unfortunately, because of the way sound works on Zoom, we will not read any of it all together. After the ordination and commissioning we will transition to our regular Zoom coffee time with an opening about worship, breakout rooms, and coming back together for announcements.

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

## Calendar

Sun. Jan. 31	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education via Zoom
	11:00 a.m.	Deacon Ordination and Coffee Time via Zoom
Wed. Feb. 3	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Feb. 4	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Feb. 4	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Feb. 5	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](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

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.*