



*A Service of Worship for  
7 February 2021*

The sacred - God - is an element of experience,  
not simply an article of faith to be believed in.

William James

Life is simple.  
We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent,  
and God is shining through it all the time.  
God shows God's self everywhere,  
in everything - in people and in things  
and in nature and in events.

Thomas Merton

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ringling in the hour  
Silence is kept

Prelude

Traditional Hebrew Melody  
arr. Cindy Berry

“The God of Abraham Praise”

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

**Our task now is to mend our broken world;  
if religion cannot do that, it is worthless.  
And what our world needs now  
is not belief, not certainty,  
but compassionate action  
and practically expressed respect  
for the sacred value of all human beings,  
even our enemies.**

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 40:21-31

These are our sacred stories.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Leoni

“The God of Abraham Praise”

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

**Holy God,  
Open our eyes to the presence of your Spirit  
upon us, within us, among us.**

**For our apathy in the presence of oppression,  
Forgive us.**

**If we have contributed to the brokenheartedness of anyone,  
Forgive us.**

**For our participation in systems that enslave,  
Forgive us.**

**When we are deaf to your good news,  
Have mercy and open our ears.**

**When our mouths remain too tightly closed,  
Loosen our lips with songs of praise.**

**Hear our prayer, O God, and forgive our sins.  
*Hold us in your mercy, now and forever. Amen.***

Words of Assurance

Music

“Laudate Dominum”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

<sup>†</sup>Prayer of Dedication

**Let us renew our commitment to make  
our homes, communities, nation, and world safe  
for the minds, bodies, and spirits of children.  
Let us commit to work for justice  
for all children and families,  
especially those imprisoned by poverty,  
violence, and racism.  
Let us commit to provide life-giving, hope-inspiring  
options for children, as alternatives to the despair,  
violence, and lack of purpose that engulfs them.  
Let us commit to support those who speak out on  
behalf of children in our communities.  
Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate;  
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,  
will be gracious to you.**

\*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.*

<sup>†</sup>Affirmation of Faith

**God is justice  
and kindness,  
mercy,  
and always—  
always—  
love.  
So if you want to know  
where God is  
in this  
or in anything,  
look for love.**

Benediction

Postlude

George Job Elvey

“Andante Religioso”

## **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Thelma Jean Goodrich**.

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

The Call to Worship is by Maya Angelou.

The Opening Sentences are from *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness* by Karen Armstrong.

The Unison Confession is based on Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11, author unknown.

“Laudate Dominum” is by **Casey Okabayashi**, soprano; Carl McAliley, organ, from March 5, 2017.

The Prayer of Dedication was developed from Resources for a Children's Sabbath by the Children's Defense Fund.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Here if You Need Me: A True Story* by Kate Braestrup.

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](#).

Kelli Soika, a member of the leadership team at CoHousing Houston, will speak about the first significant CoHousing community in Houston. Lynn Morstead, another leader in the group spoke to our class about a year ago, to a good reception. Here is the information Ms. Soika provided:

CoHousing Houston is building connection at a time when many people are experiencing greater loneliness and isolation. It is a thriving group of people who are committed to intentional community—where neighbors are not only friendly, but friends. An idea that originated in Denmark, cohousing is individual homes arranged around shared space. The Common House hosts neighborhood dinners a few times per week and the residents take on the work of sharing decisions and caring for their buildings and grounds. The space is specifically designed so that neighbors "run into" each other every day, creating strong bonds of shared living.

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 coffee time with Zoom

## Calendar

Sun. Feb. 7	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. Feb. 8	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Feb. 10	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Feb. 11	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Feb. 11	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Feb. 12	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

Andrew Bowen, Interim 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.*