



*A Service of Worship for
Third Sunday of Lent
7 March 2021*

We must finally stop appealing
to theology to justify our reserved silence
about what the state is doing — for that is nothing but fear.

‘Open your mouth for the one
who is voiceless’ — for who in the church today
still remembers that that is the least
of the Bible’s demands in times such as these?

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless.
Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

C.V. Stanford

“Lento in G Major”

Call to Worship

†Opening Sentences

**Douglas Steere, a Quaker teacher,
says that the ancient question,
“Who am I?” inevitably leads to a deeper one,
“Whose am I?”— because there
is no identity outside of relationship.
You can’t be a person by yourself.
To ask “Whose am I?”
is to extend the question far beyond
the little self-absorbed self, and wonder:
Who needs you? Who loves you?
To whom are you accountable?
To whom do you answer?
Whose life is altered by your choices?
With whose life, whose lives, is your own all bound up,
inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways.**

Scripture Lesson

John 2:13-22

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Sharphorne

“What Does the Lord Require”

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

**We confess that we are still learning the way of love
timidly, afraid of what will be asked for
suspiciously, not trusting in the unknown
half-heartedly, reluctant to take risks with our living.**

**Yet we confess that we aspire to walk the path of love
restless, wanting to discover what awaits
imaginatively, envisioning the possibilities
freely, searching out the holy and the human in every place.**

**Help us, O God, to become a people
who both wander in the wilderness
and gather around a common table
with enough grace and humor
to speak and share your love.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Invitation

†Prayer of Dedication

**May the anger of Christ be mine,
When the world grows hard and greedy;
when the rich have no care for the poor,
when the powerful take from the needy.**

**May the compassion of Christ be mine,
when the outstretched hand is not taken,
when the jobless stand in line,
when the lonely live forsaken.**

**May the love of Christ be mine
for the anguished, for the ailing,
for the frail, disabled life,
for the fallen, for the failing.**

**May the actions of Christ be mine,
bringing hope, bringing new direction;
making peace in a warring time,
offering welcome, not rejection.**

*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.*

THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

You are welcome to use whatever elements you have for communion this Sunday.

Music

“Os Justi”

Anton Bruckner

+Affirmation of Faith

**That peace
will rise like bread
we can always hope.**

**That justice
will flow like wine
we can always hope.**

**That the table
will make strangers kin
we can always hope.**

**That our hope
will rise like bread
we can always pray.**

Benediction

Postlude

Johannes Brahms

“Intermezzo”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Clinton Gambill**.

The Lent banner was created by **Nancy Henry**.

The prelude is played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

The Call to Worship is by Cornel West.

The Opening Sentences are by Victoria Safford.

The Unison Confession is by Jeremy Rutledge.

“Os Justi” directed by **Fran Avera**, from March 6, 2018. The photo used in the video is of St. Florian Abbey, where Ignaz Traumihler, to whom “Os Justi” was dedicated, was choirmaster, and where it was first performed.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Colin Gibson in *Dare to Dream: A Prayer and Worship Anthology from Around the World* edited by Geoffrey Duncan.

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

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

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

Today, join us for a presentation by Moonshot Compost, an organization dedicated to reducing food waste in Houston, a significant example of “Sustainable Living,” which the Adult Education Committee plans to add as one of the recurring categories it uses in planning its classes in 2021, along with Biblical and theological topics, world religions, White Supremacy and racism, economic and social inequality, key ethical issues, spiritual journeys, and others.” Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: <https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

Announcements

The Zoom information is on our online gatherings page: <https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>. You will need a password to open this webpage. Please let the office know if you need help with the password.

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. Mar. 7	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. Mar.8	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Tue. Mar. 9	6:00 p.m.	Kids' Corner, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Mar. 10	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Mar. 11	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Mar. 11	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Mar. 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.

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
Andrew Bowen, Interim Organist
Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

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