



*A Service of Worship for
Palm/Passion Sunday
28 March 2021*

And so we come on our donkeys,
Some from Detroit and some from Tokyo
and even a few from Seoul.
With horns blaring and brakes screeching,
We enter the city, the holy of holies.
We know what Caesar wants:
Testing ranges and new arenas
while the homeless haunt church basements
and the poor shuffle in the streets.
But we march to a different drummer.
Not many rich, not many mighty.
A vagabond crew in a strange land,
Whose ways are not our ways
Nor thoughts our thoughts.
But let us be of good cheer.
Let the word go out.
The donkey is mightier than the missile.
And flowers have been known to split a rock.
It is Caesar's week.
But it is God's world.
And so we take heart and rejoice.

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour
Silence is kept

Prelude

Raymond Weidner

“The Royal Banners Forward Go”

Call to Worship

+Opening Prayer

**O Thou, whose kingdom is within,
may all thy names be hallowed.
May no one of them be turned against the others
to divide those who address thee.**

**May thy presence be made known to us
in mercy, beauty, love, and justice.
May thy kingdom come to be in the life
of all humankind.
May it come with peace, with sharing,
and in a near time.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,
free from all envy and alienation,
broken and blessed in the sharing.**

**Keep us from trespass against others,
and from the feeling that others are
trespassing against us.
Forgive us more than we have forgiven.**

**Deliver us from being tempted by lesser things
to be heedless of the one great thing:
the gift of thyself in us.**

Scripture Lesson

Mark 11:1-11

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

St. Flavian

“Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

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

**If we do not work for, or in some way support
the establishment of God’s kingdom of love and justice,
then our silence and inactivity will ultimately serve
the forces of injustice.**

**We wish to be counted among those who truly tried
to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Franz Schubert

“Sanctus and Benedictus” from *Mass in G*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

†Prayer of Dedication

**Help him
that's what faith is
he can't bring it about
his kingdom
couldn't then couldn't later can't now
not at any rate without you
and that is his irresistible appeal**

*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

**Through Jesus' life and teachings
we see that God's power consists
not in coercion but in God's willingness
to forgive and have mercy.**

**God wills nothing less than that
all people should love their enemies
and forgive one another.**

**Jesus challenged both the militaristic
and ritualistic notions of what God's kingdom required.**

**He issued this challenge not only through his teaching
but through his life. The announcement of the reality
of the kingdom, its presence here and now,
is embodied in life.**

**In him we see that living a life of forgiveness and peace
is not an impossible ideal
but an opportunity now present.**

Benediction

Postlude

Healey Willan

“Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Tonya McKinny**.

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

The prelude is played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

The Call to Worship is “Blessing in a Time of Violence” by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Prayer is from Jacob Trapp in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Unison Confession is adapted from *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus’ Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted* by Obery Hendricks, Jr.

“Sanctus and Benedictus” from *Mass in G* is sung by The Covenant Singers, May 1, 2016, directed by **Fran Avera**. The soloists in the Benedictus are **Casey Okabayshi**, soprano; **Eric Avera**, tenor; and **Jay Hooker**, baritone. **Susan Wegner** is the cellist and Ben Grube is the violinist.

The Prayer of Dedication is from “When He Came” by Dorothee Soelle.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from “Jesus and the Kingdom of God” in *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Stanley Hauerwas.

The postlude is played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

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

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

Adult Education this Sunday will deal with the events of Holy Week, featuring a lecture by John Dominic Crossan, whose lessons added so much to our pre-Christmas classes.

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: <https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

Announcements

Covenant Holy Week Details

Palm/Passion Sunday - March 28

9:00 AM - Adult Education on Zoom

10:00 AM - Worship

11:00 AM - Coffee Time on Zoom with breakout rooms

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM - Covenant Palm/Passion activity:

For this Sunday afternoon activity we will have the singing bowl in the color garden. You are invited to write a prayer at home on a piece of paper so you can leave your prayer in the singing

bowl. These prayers will remain private. A member of the worship committee will ring the bowl. Next to the singing bowl you will find palm fronds. Everyone is welcome to take a palm frond. This palm frond is yours to take home. Frond in hand, you are invited to move to the windows of the Huff Fellowship Hall where you can write a note with the sticky notes provided and leave it on the windows for everyone to see. We will have markers and hand sanitizer and please feel free to bring your own markers. At the end, we will take pictures of everyone's notes and post them on the worship website on Easter Sunday. Please wear a mask and remain physically distanced throughout this in-person event. The Sunday service will be provided in the usual form on our website.

Good Friday - April 2

7:00 PM on Zoom for a Tenebrae Service - This will be a live (not pre-recorded) worship service followed by breakout rooms. All are welcome. The Zoom link is listed on the Online Gatherings page.

Easter Sunday - April 4

9:00 AM - Adult Education on Zoom

10:00 AM - Worship

11:00 AM - Flowering Coffee Time on Zoom with breakout rooms

If you are able, bring a flower to the Coffee Time Zoom. For the last several years we have created a flowering cross on Easter Sunday. This year, we will create a flowering Zoom. With your flower, be ready to offer an Easter hallelujah: something you would like to celebrate this Easter Sunday. The Sunday service will be provided in the usual form on our website. There will also be a virtual Easter Egg Hunt for kids available beginning Easter Sunday morning. The link will be on the worship page and in the Easter Sunday morning email.

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. 28	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. Mar. 29	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Mar. 31	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Apr. 1	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Apr. 1	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Apr. 2	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

4949 Caroline Street

Houston, Texas 77004

713-668-8830

office@covenanthouston.org

www.covenanthouston.org

Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.

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.