



*A Service of Worship for
Easter Sunday
4 April 2021*

If Easter means anything to modern people
it means that eternal truth is eternal.

You may nail it to the tree,
wrap it up in grave clothes,
and seal it in a tomb;
but "truth crushed to earth,
shall rise again."

Truth does not perish;
it cannot be destroyed.

It may be distorted;
it has been silenced temporarily;
it has been compelled
to carry its cross to Calvary's brow
or to drink the cup of
poisoned hemlock in a Grecian jail,
but with an inevitable certainty
after every Good Friday
dawns truth's Easter Morn.

Donald Harvey Tippet

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Dale Wood

“I Know That My Redeemer Lives”

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

**Am I meant to rise too?
To push away what leans against the door of my
pinched heart?**

I cannot.

**Compassion for myself
is a slow growing crop,
however carefully tended
it yields an unreliable harvest.**

**These resurrections
ask more than I can give
every time
this hurts more
than the pains of my body
than the old world full of sorrows
this offering of love
this unbearable gift of another chance.**

Scripture Lesson

Mark 16:1-8

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

CWM Rhondda

“Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!”

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.*

Presenting a Bible to Sebastian Cuellar

Minister: Every week we read from the sacred stories together and each of us understands them a bit differently. Listening together we can hear many things.

People: Thus, we are joined as a community of interpreters, giving and receiving in our search for what is sacred.

Minister: One of our customs is to offer our children the sacred stories in the hopes that they will read them carefully and offer us their insights.

People: For we affirm that every person has access to the divine.

Minister: There is one among us, Sebastian, who has recently turned ten. We welcome him, officially this day, into the community of interpreters. Together we have much to learn from each other. Sebastian, we would like to give you a Bible. It is full of stories that are sacred to us. Will you read them and think about them, always remembering that they are meant to teach us love for God, our neighbors, and our world?

Sebastian: I will read these sacred stories and seek to learn from them.

People: Then together we will join with you, Sebastian, and with others in the great and ongoing conversation among interpreters. We will share our understanding, our experiences, our questions, and our hopes as we read from the sacred stories and open ourselves to the dialogue that follows. We welcome and affirm you as a companion in this process.

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

We believe:

**Neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

[†]Prayer of Dedication

**God of Love,
May I not forget I have a heart - to love a broken world.
May I not forget I have a voice - to speak out for the poor.
May I not forget I have hands - to reach out to other people.
May I not forget I have feet - to go where I am needed.
Let me never forget
You will be with me
Always.**

*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

**If we say we believe in the resurrection
it only has meaning if we are people
who believe in the possibility
of transformed lives, transformed attitudes,
and transformed societies.**

The action is the proof of the belief.

**I can say I believe...because I see resurrections now,
see stones rolled away and new possibilities
rising from old attitudes.**

Music

“Hallelujah” from MESSIAH

G.F. Handel

Benediction

Postlude

“Today, the Son of God Triumphs”

J.S. Bach

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Tonya McKinny**.

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

The prelude and postlude are played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

The Call to Worship is by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Sentences are "Eastering", a poem by Barbara Pescan from *Morning Watch*.

The Unison Confession is Romans 8:38-39.

“Hallelujah” from MESSIAH is sung by The Covenant Singers, directed by **Fran Avera**. The organist is Dr. Robert Bates.

The Prayer of Dedication is an adapted prayer of Max Khanna.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Doubts and Loves: What is Left of Christianity* by Richard Holloway.

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

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

The Adult Education offering for Easter Sunday will be an excellent lecture by Vanderbilt Jewish New Testament scholar Amy Jill Levine. She titles it “Jesus in Text and Context,” which is congruent with, though not identical to the approach of John Dominic Crossan, whose lectures we have heard during Advent and in his talk about “The Last Week” that we heard on Palm Sunday. Prof. Levine is an engaging speaker and her theological views fit well with Laura’s proclamations and the content of our classes, whether explicitly articulated or implicitly professed in presentations that encourage us to practice justice, show mercy, and walk humbly with God. It is a fine way to begin the celebration of Easter—assuming you may have missed a sunrise service.

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

Announcements

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.

Calendar

Sun. Apr. 4	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. Apr. 5	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Apr. 7	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Apr. 8	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Apr. 8	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Apr. 9	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

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