



This icon was created by Kelly Latimore

*A Service of Worship for
Fifth Sunday of Eastertide
2 May 2021*

Press your hand
to this blessing,
here along
the side
where you can feel
its seam.

Follow the seam
and you will find
the hinges
on which
this blessing turns.

Feel how
your fingers
catch on them—
top, bottom,
the slightest pressure
sending the gate
gliding open
in a glad welcome.

Wait, did I say
press your hand
to this blessing?

What I meant was
press your hand
to your heart.

Rest it over that
place in your chest
that has grown
closed and tight,
where the rust,
with its talent
for making decay
look artful,
has bitten into
what you once
held dear.

Breathe deep.
Press on the knot
and feel how it
begins to give way,
turning upon
the hinge
of your heart.

Notice how it
opens wide
and wider still
as you exhale,
spilling you out
into a realm
where you never dreamed
to go
but cannot now imagine
living this life
Without.

Jan Richardson

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour
Silence is kept

Prelude

Dale Wood

“I Come With Joy”

Call to Worship

+Opening Sentences

There is a famous saying that from great suffering comes great compassion.

**Well, from great suffering can come great compassion,
or from great suffering can come great hatred.**

**From great suffering can come great openness of heart,
a great sense of kinship with others,
or from great suffering can come hatred, resentment and despair.**

People need a lot of support for suffering to turn into compassion.

Scripture Lesson

John 10:11-18

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Music

Southern Harmony

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

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

**O God who is love,
when you seem so far away from us,
remind us to reach within
to the fountain of feelings at the core of ourselves
and there, let us find you.**

**When you seem so unconcerned,
so massive, so impassive,
so insulated by your power,
so distant by your expansiveness,
remind us to reach out
to the hand of a child,
to the face of a friend,
and there let us find you.**

**And in times when we have nothing to feel
and there is no one to touch,
let us never close our hearts or our hands,
but always, let us be open to you,
and let us be open today; here and now. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

“Good Shepherd, We Are Not Alone”

Puer Nobis Nascitur

Prayer

Invitation

†Prayer of Dedication

**Trusting God is not assurance that whatever we do,
all will work out well. It is instead confidence
that God’s call is wise and good.
It is sensitizing ourselves to this call so that we can be led and guided by it.
It is the renewed willingness to give up
the security we experience in ideas and customs
and to enter into the adventure of the trusting life.**

*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

**Listen to what God is saying to us:
You are my child.
You are written on the palm of my hand.
You are hidden in the shadow of my hand.
I have molded you from the secret of the earth.
I have knitted you together in your mother's womb.
You belong to me.
I am yours. You are mine.
I have called you from eternity
and you are the one who is held safe
and embraced in love from eternity to eternity.
You belong to me.
I hold you safe and I want you to know that
whatever happens to you, I am always there.
I am always there.
I am always there.
I will always be there and hold you in my embrace.

You are mine.
You are my child.
You belong to my home.
You belong to my intimate life
and I will never let you go.
I will be faithful to you.**

Benediction

Postlude

J.S. Bach

“Today God's Son is Triumphant”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Bill Kline**.

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

The Call to Worship is by Albert Schweitzer.

The Opening Sentences are by Pema Chödrön from an interview by Bell Hooks.

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need” is sung by **Casey Okabayashi**, soprano.

The Unison Confession is from *Touch Holiness* by Ruth C. Duck.

"Good Shepherd, We Are Not Alone" text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* by John Cobb and David Griffin.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Henri Nouwen: from *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*.

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

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

This Sunday, Rose Lange will share her spiritual journey.

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

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

Calendar

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| Sun. May 2 | 9:00 a.m. | Adult Education via Zoom |
| | 10:00 a.m. | Worship Online + Business Meeting |
| | 11:00 a.m. | Zoom coffee time Business Meeting Video (Worship Page) |
| | 1:00 p.m. | Youth Outdoor Gathering (Covenant) |
| | 3:00 p.m. | Deacon's Outdoor Gathering (Covenant) |
| Wed. May 5 | 7:00 p.m. | Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting |
| Thur. May 6 | 10:00 a.m. | Community Group, Zoom Meeting |
| Thur. May 6 | 8:00 p.m. | Community Group, Zoom Meeting |
| Fri. May 7 | 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

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

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