



*A Service of Worship for
Ascension Sunday
16 May 2021*

And the world cannot be discovered
by a journey of miles,
no matter how long,
but only by a spiritual journey,
a journey of one inch,
very arduous and humbling and joyful,
by which we arrive at the ground at our own feet,
and learn to be at home.

Wendell Berry

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour
Silence is kept

Prelude

Dieterich Buxtehude

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

Call to Worship

†Opening Prayer

**Spirit of life, come to us to break down barriers;
to widen horizons;
to make us less judgmental.
Help us to see the larger picture and the kinder conclusion;
to love and let live;
to embrace and forgive;
to sustain and care.
Help us to reach out to our better selves,
that we may love more and hate less,
care more and reject less,
that bound together by understanding
we may sustain each other through trial and tribulation,
through joy and happiness,
through sickness and health.
Help us, O God, to be joined in a common purpose of hope and fulfillment.
Renew and revive us.
We seek a common, holy ground for one and all.
Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Acts 1:1-11

These are our sacred stories.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn

“Holy Spirit, Truth Divine”

Song 13

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 touch this strength, our power, who we are in
the world, when we are most fully in touch with
one another and with the world.**

**There is no doubt in my mind that, in so doing,
we are participants in ongoing incarnation,
bringing God to life in the world.**

**For God is an eternally creative
source of our relational power, our common strength,
a God whose movement is to empower, bringing us
into our own together, a God whose name in history is love
which is just, mutually empowering, and co-creative.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Vaughan Williams, arr. Dietterich

“Come Down, O Love Divine”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**May my feet rest firmly on the ground
May my head touch the sky
May I see clearly
May I have the capacity to listen**

**May I be free to touch
May my words be true
May my heart and mind be open
May my hands be empty to fill the need
May my arms be open to others
May my gifts be revealed to me
So I may return that which has been given
Completing the great circle.**

*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

Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.

Benediction

Postlude

Dale Wood

“When I Can Read My Title Clear”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Bill Kline**.

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

The Call to Worship is from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder.

The Opening Prayer is by Rhys Williams.

The Unison Confession is adapted from *Touching Our Strength* by Carter Heyward.

The Prayer of Dedication is a prayer from the Terma Collective printed in *Life Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Henry David Thoreau.

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

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

Our speaker will be Amanda Focke, Head of Special Collections at Rice University's Fondren Library. She will give a talk entitled "Where do we go from here? The complex path to memorializing the [Sugar Land 95](#)," drawing on her work helping to curate the Reginald Moore Sugar Land Convict Leasing System Research Collection.

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: [Covenant Gatherings](#)

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. May 16	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 am.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. May 17	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. May 19	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. May 20	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. May 20	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. May 21	1:00 p.m.	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting
Sat. Jun 5	9:00 a.m.	Facilities Work Day, Covenant

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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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.