



*A Service of Worship for  
27 June 2021*

This is the blessing  
we cannot speak  
by ourselves.

This is the blessing  
we cannot summon  
by our own devices,  
cannot shape  
to our purpose,  
cannot bend  
to our will.

This is the blessing  
that comes  
when we leave behind  
our aloneness  
when we gather  
together  
when we turn  
toward one another.

This is the blessing  
that blazes among us  
when we speak  
the words  
strange to our ears  
when we finally listen  
into the chaos  
when we breathe together  
at last.

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

Beethoven/arr. by Cindy Berry

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

Call to Worship

†Opening Prayer

**Living God, astound us once more  
with signs of your presence.  
In the withered corners of our love,  
amaze us with small, swelling buds.  
In the dead center of our despair,  
astonish us with tender shoots of hope.  
Across the barren fields of betrayal,  
let our bewildered eyes open  
to the greening of forgiveness.  
Into the frozen certainties of our endings,  
breathe warmth, that faith again may flower  
and exude the honey-damp fragrance of life.  
All praise and thanks to you, surprising God.  
Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 30

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Austrian Hymn

“God of Grace and God of Laughter”

**God of grace and God of laughter,  
singing worlds from nought to be  
sun and stars and all thereafter  
joined in cosmic harmony:  
give us songs of joy and wonder,  
music making hearts rejoice;  
let our praises swell like thunder,  
echoing our Maker's voice.**

**When our lives are torn by sadness,  
heal our wounds with tuneful balm;  
when all seems discordant madness,  
help us find a measured calm.  
Steady us with music's anchor  
when the storms of life increase;  
in the midst of hurt and rancor,  
make us instruments of peace.**

**Turn our sighing into singing,  
music born of hope restored;  
set our souls and voices ringing,  
tune our hearts in true accord:**

**till we form a mighty chorus joining angel choirs above,  
with all those who went before us,  
in eternal hymns of love.**

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

**Let us pray that we may notice and accept the Divinity of tiny things  
the Divine of ordinary miracles and even in the awkward mistakes.  
In frivolous conversation with friends  
in wordless companionship with a loved one  
in the work that seems futile one day  
but resonates with meaning the next.  
In the shared meal, and the shopping list  
In the peaceful sleep  
in the simple procession of the spring days.  
We pray this moment to keep tender vigil over our precious, imperfect lives.  
To know each one as a vessel, however cracked or broken, of the Holy.  
So may we strive to recognize the indwelling presence of God in all people,  
in all living things, and even in ourselves. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

John Rutter

“A Gaelic Blessing”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Johann Ludwig Krebs

“Prelude in B-Flat”

+Prayer of Dedication

**We gather as people  
in the process  
of becoming our best selves  
living our best lives  
and making our best world.  
May this hour gift us  
with new vision  
for what might be.**

\*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

**We will not go back to normal.  
Normal never was.  
Our pre-corona existence was not normal  
other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction,  
disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack.**

**We should not long to return, my friends.  
We are being given the opportunity  
to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.**

+Closing Hymn #384

“O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

St. Margaret

Benediction

Postlude

arr. by Vernon Charter

“Praise to the Lord”

### **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Jason Stark**.

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

The prelude, offertory, and postlude are played by **Karen Kline**, piano.

The Call to Worship is a prayer adapted from and inspired by the weekly order of worship.

The Opening Prayer is from “Signs of Life” from *The Well is Deep: Prayers to Draw Up Living Water* by Virginia Rickeman.

The Unison Confession is adapted from a prayer of Victoria Weinstein.

“God of Grace and God of Laughter” text by Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1989.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Jeremy Rutledge.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Sonya Renee Taylor.

Please note: There are restrooms upstairs. We ask that you use those during the service.

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

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

Join Laura Mayo and Dr. Virgil Fry (Director Emeritus of Lifeline Chaplaincy) on Zoom at 9:00 AM for a discussion of grief. While this Sunday is a day of joy as those who are ready return to in-person worship, we also hold tremendous grief for those of our community who have died and for the millions around the world who have died. We also have experienced and continue to experience many losses and disappointments connected to this time of global pandemic.

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

## **Announcements**

### **Sunday schedule for this Sunday:**

Adult Education (Zoom) 9am

Worship in-person (Covenant) 11am

Worship live-stream 11am (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLUHLFqqtJ0>)

Children & Youth Outdoor Gathering (Covenant) 12:30pm

## **Calendar**

Sun. June 27	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 a.m.	Worship live-stream
	12:30 p.m.	Children & Youth Outdoor Gathering, Covenant
Mon. June 28	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. July 1	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. July 1	7:15 p.m.	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Thur. July 1	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. July 2	1:00 p.m.	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting

## **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](mailto:Office@covenanthouston.org).

**Newsletter:** To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to [office@covenanthouston.org](mailto: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.*