



*A Service of Worship for
9 September 2021*

To bring about change,
you must not be afraid to take the first step.
We will fail when we fail to try.

- Rosa Parks

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

- James Baldwin

Justice is what love looks like in public.

- Cornel West

Prejudice is a disease.

And when they come for you, or refuse your worth, I will be ready for their stones.

I belong to you.

- Lady Gaga

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

arr. Nancy Telfer

“Elle est comme l'hirondelle”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #386

Azmon

“O for a World”

+Opening Prayer

**For the bigotry that leads us to fear and hate
those different from ourselves,
we cry out:
God, have mercy.**

**For the times when we have been the instruments of discrimination
against our sisters and brothers,
we cry out:
Christ, have mercy.**

**For the times when our nation has closed the door of compassion
to the poor,
we cry out:
God, have mercy.**

**And may almighty God forgive us our sins,
grace us with new life,
and give us peace.
Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Mark 7:24-37

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

**Ushers will seat latecomers*

+Please stand in body or spirit

Time for Children

*+Response:

Jesus Loves Me

*Jesus loves me still today, Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give Peace and love to all who live.
Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.*

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**“Courage is not the absence of fear,
but the strength to do what is right in the face of it,”
as the anonymous philosopher tells us.
Some of us are restrained by fear
of what could happen to us if we resist.

In our naïveté, we are less fearful
of what could happen to us
or is already happening to us
if we don’t resist.**

Words of Assurance

Music

“I Will Sing of Thy Great Mercies, O Lord”

Felix Mendelssohn

Proclamation

Silent Reflection

Hymn #436

“We Are Your People”

Whitfield

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

“Prelude in E minor”, Op. 28, No. 4

Frederic Chopin

+Prayer of Dedication

**Let no one be discouraged by the belief that there is nothing
one man or one woman can do against the enormous array
of the world's ills—against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence.**

**Few will have the greatness to bend history itself;
but each of us can work to change a small portion of events,
and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.**

**It is from the numberless diverse acts of courage and belief
that human history is shaped. Each time a person stands up for an ideal,
or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice,
that person sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other
from a million different centers of energy and daring,
those ripples build a current
which can sweep down the mightiest walls
of oppression and resistance.**

+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

**The beauty of anti-racism
is that you don't have to pretend
to be free of racism to be an anti-racist.
Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism
wherever you find it, including in yourself.
And it's the only way forward.**

+Closing Hymn #418

“God, Bless Your Church with Strength!”

Ich Halte Treulich Still

Benediction

Postlude

“O for a Thousand Tongues”

arr. Virginia Halberg

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Linda Phenix**.

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

The Call to Worship is by Jeremy Rutledge.

The Opening Prayer is by Edward Francis Gabriele from his book *From Many One: Praying our Rich and Diverse Cultural Heritage*.

The Unison Confession is by Ibram X. Kendi from *How to Be an Antiracist*.

“I Will Sing of Thy Great Mercies, O Lord” is sung by **Candy Luedde**.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from Robert Kennedy, as quoted by Jeffrey Sachs in *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Ijeoma Oluo.

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

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

In keeping with Covenant’s recommendation that becoming more aware of and combating racism should be a major focus for our church throughout this year, the Adult Education offering on Sunday, September 5, will feature a filmed interview and conversation with Isabel Wilkerson, the author of [Caste, The Origins of our Discontent](#), the long-running New York Times bestseller described in August 2020 by a Times reviewer as “elegant and persuasive” and “at once beautifully written and painful to read.”

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

Calendar

Sun. Sept 5	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 a.m.	Worship live-stream
Mon. Sept 6	1:00 p.m.	No Book Group
Thur. Sept 9	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Sept 9	7:15 p.m.	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Thur. Sept 9	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Sept 10	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.

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 Communication

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

David Lee, Director of Music

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.