



*A Service of Worship for  
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
14 March 2021*

Courage is a heart word.

The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart.

In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant

"To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart."

Over time, this definition has changed,  
and today, we typically associate courage  
with heroic and brave deeds.

But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength  
and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly  
and openly about who we are and about our experiences -- good and bad.

Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage."

Brene Brown

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

J.S. Bach

“Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above”

Call to Worship

†Opening Prayer

**God of Justice, whenever we settle  
for the way things are instead  
of the way you would have them  
to be, forgive us.  
Whenever we are paralyzed by fear  
or limited in vision,  
increase our trust in you.  
Whenever we offer charity,  
but fail to work for justice,  
show us the more excellent way  
that your love requires.  
Whenever we tire of the struggle  
and tomorrow feels overwhelming,  
restore our hope.  
Whenever we forget those  
who have gone before us or act as if  
we were the first to follow in the way of peace,  
allow us to recognize our arrogance.  
May the resources of our faith encourage us to dream again.  
Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Ephesians 2:1-22

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Aurelia

“O Christ, the Great Foundation”

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, You have called us to peace, for You are Peace itself.  
May we have the vision to see that each of us, in some measure,  
can help to realize these aims:  
Where there are ignorance and superstition,  
Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.  
Where there are prejudice and hatred,  
Let there be acceptance and love.  
Where there are fear and suspicion,  
Let there be confidence and trust.  
Where there are tyranny and oppression,  
Let there be freedom and justice.  
Where there are poverty and disease,  
Let there be prosperity and health.  
Where there are strife and discord,  
Let there be harmony and peace. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

John Ness Beck  
arr. Craig Courtney

“A Hymn to God”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**Often we are found in our grief and comforted  
calmed by some kindness  
brought alive again by beauty  
that catches us undefended.**

**Even when the sun is most thin and far  
even at the hour the storm is at its height  
we can go through  
renewal nests within sorrow  
love abides, ever beyond anger, beyond death.**

**We are held in an embrace invisible but infinite  
moving with all creation  
between wholeness and fragmentation  
moving always toward the one.**

**Small joys and great sorrows pass  
and we, with steps uncertain, move on  
to whatever is next**

**but continually seen, heard, held  
by Life infinite and remote, intimate and abiding.**

**Love, do not let us go.      Amen.**

\*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

**It doesn't interest me  
what you do for a living.  
I want to know what you ache for,  
and if you dare to dream  
of meeting your heart's longing.**

**It doesn't interest me  
how old you are.  
I want to know if you will risk**

**looking like a fool  
for love, for your dream,  
for the adventure of being alive.**

**I want to know if you have touched  
the center of your own sorrow,  
if you have been opened by life's betrayals  
or have become shriveled and closed  
from fear of further pain.**

**I want to know if you can sit with pain,  
mine or your own,  
without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.**

**I want to know if you can be with joy,  
mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness  
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips  
of your fingers and toes without cautioning us  
to be careful, to be realistic.**

**I want to know if you can live with failure,  
yours and mine, and still stand on the edge  
of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"**

**It doesn't interest me to know  
where you live or  
how much money you have.**

**I want to know if you can get up,  
after the night of grief and despair,  
weary and bruised to the bone,  
and do what needs to be done for the children.**

**It doesn't interest me who you know  
or how you came to be here.**

**I want to know if you will stand  
in the center of the fire with me  
and not shrink back.**

Benediction

Postlude

J.S. Bach

"Menuet" from Partita No. 1

## **Worship Notes**

The worship leader is **Clinton Gambill**.

The prelude is played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

The Call to Worship is from *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* by Pema Chödrön.

The Opening Prayer is adapted from a prayer by J. Bennett Guess.

The Unison Confession is adapted from *Gates of Prayer, The New Union Prayer Book*, Central Conference of American Rabbis.

“A Hymn to God” is sung by The Covenant Singers, Fran Avera, directing, from March 25, 2016.

The Prayer of Dedication is “Love Abides” by Barbara Pescan.

The postlude is played by **Karen Kline**, piano.

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

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

During Adult Education this Sunday, please join Laura Mayo to discuss substitutionary atonement. What is substitutionary atonement? Why is substitutionary atonement problematic? Where did the idea come from? If we don't buy into substitutionary atonement then why did Jesus die on the cross? What theological meanings does Jesus' death on the cross have?

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

### **Calendar**

Sun. Mar. 14	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. Mar. 15	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Mar. 17	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Mar. 18	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Mar. 18	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Mar. 19	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](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.*