

- Jesus Mafa

*A Service of Worship for
Easter Sunday
31 March 2024*

Two of the fingers on his right hand
had been broken
so when he poured back into that hand it surprised
him—it hurt him at first.

And the whole body was too small. Imagine
the sky trying to fit into a tunnel carved into a hill.

He came into it two ways:
From the outside, as we step into a pair of pants.

And from the center—suddenly all at once.
Then he felt himself awake in the dark alone.

Marie Howe

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringing in the hour

Silence is kept

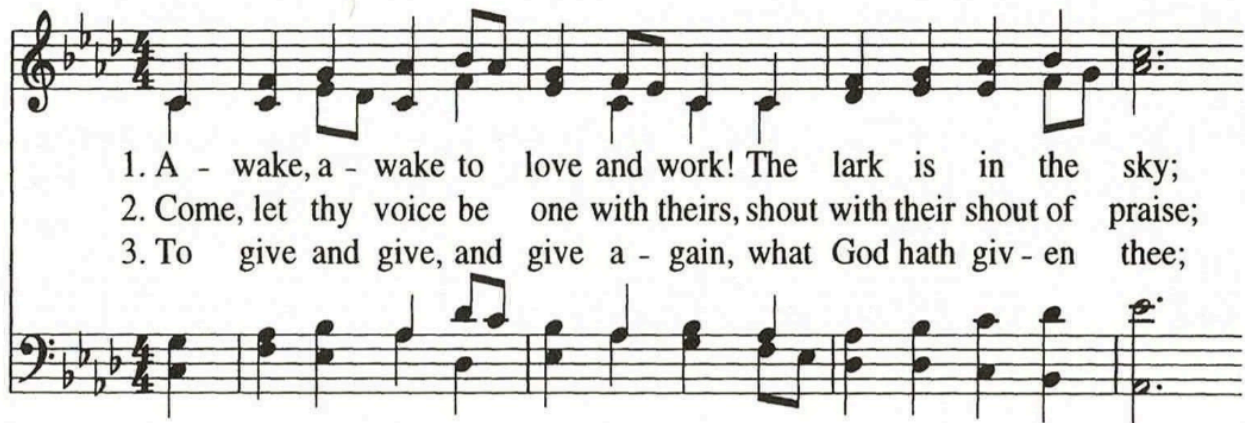
*Prelude

Jeanne Demessieux
(1921-1968)

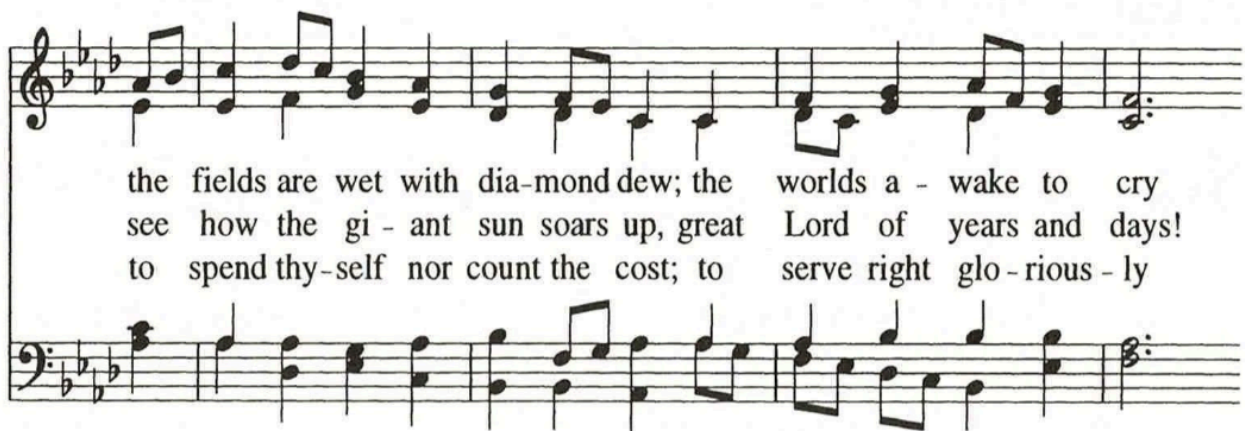
“Variations on ‘O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing’”

Call to Worship

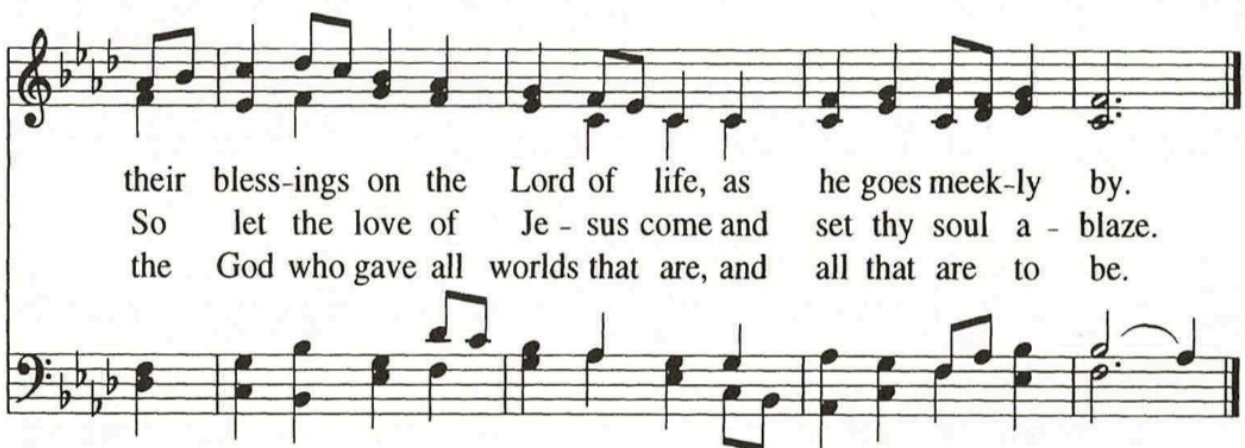
Awake, Awake to Love and Work



1. A - wake, a - wake to love and work! The lark is in the sky;
2. Come, let thy voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
3. To give and give, and give a - gain, what God hath giv - en thee;



the fields are wet with dia-mond dew; the worlds a - wake to cry
see how the gi - ant sun soars up, great Lord of years and days!
to spend thy-self nor count the cost; to serve right glo - rious - ly



their bless-ings on the Lord of life, as he goes meek-ly by.
So let the love of Je - sus come and set thy soul a - blaze.
the God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be.

WORDS: Geoffrey A. Studdert-Kennedy, 1921

MORNING SONG

MUSIC: John Logan's *Sixteen Tune Settings*, 1812; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, *The Hymnal*, 1940

86.86.86

The author was an English World War I chaplain, fondly known then as 'Woodbine Willie.' He later became chaplain to the King of England.

Harm. © 1985 Church Pension Fund

+Opening Prayer

**We are convinced:
Neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

John 20:1-18

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+Response:

Hymn to Joy

*Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o'er us, joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us homeward, in the triumph song of life.*

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Responsive Unison Confession

Leader: Why this sadness toward spring?
Half smiles at the first yellow flowers,
Tears pooling for no reason with each rain and sunset?

Each year this green show
blows wide winter's coverings and lets us see
the swell and push of beginnings again.

**People: Am I meant to rise too?
To push away what leans against the door of my
pinched heart?**

I cannot.

**Compassion for myself
is a slow growing crop,
however carefully tended
it yields an unreliable harvest.**

**These resurrections
ask more than I can give
every time
this hurts more
than the pains of my body
than the old world full of sorrows
this offering of love
this unbearable gift of another chance.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Thomas Matthews

“The Day of Resurrection”

*The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness, the Passover of God.
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over with hymns of victory.
Our hearts are pure from evil, that we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal of resurrection light;
And, listening to His accents, may hear so calm and plain
His own “All hail!” and hearing, may raise the victor strain.
Now let the heavens be joyful, let earth her song begin,
The round world keep high triumph, and all that is therein.
Let all things seen and unseen their notes together blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen, our joy that hath no end.
Alleluia.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

“O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing!”

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
O sons and daughters, let us sing!
The King of heaven, the glorious King,
O'er death and hell rose triumphing.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

That Easter morn, at break of day,
The faithful women went their way
To seek the tomb where Jesus lay.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

An angel clad in white they see,
Who sat and spoke unto the three,
“Your Lord goes on to Galilee.”
Alleluia! Alleluia!

That night the apostles met in fear;
Among them came their Lord most dear,
And said, “My peace be on all here.”
Alleluia! Alleluia!

On this most holy day of days,
To God your hearts and voices raise,
In laud and jubilee and praise.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer

Offering
Offertory

Kristina Rizzotto
(b. 1989)

“Lūgšana” (The Prayer)

+Prayer of Dedication

**To be fully human, fully myself,
To accept all that I am, all that you envision,
This is my prayer.
Walk with me out to the rim of life,
Beyond security.
Take me to the exquisite edge of courage
And release me to become.**

+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

**Every death means parting, separation,
isolation, opposition and not participation. . . .
It is love, human and divine,
which overcomes death in nations and generations
and in all the horror of our time . . .
It rescues life from death.
It rescues each of us, for love is stronger than death.**

“Because You Live, O Christ”

**Because You live, O Christ, the garden of the world has come to flower;
The darkness of the tomb is flooded with Your resurrection power.**

Refrain:

**The stone has rolled away and death cannot imprison!
O sing this Easter Day, for Jesus Christ has risen, has risen, has risen, has
risen!**

**Because You live, O Christ, the spirit bird of hope is freed for flying;
Our cages of despair no longer keep us closed and life-denying. (Refrain)**

**Because You live, O Christ, the rainbow of Your peace will span creation,
The colors of Your love will draw all humankind to adoration. (Refrain)**

Benediction

*Postlude

Charles-Marie Widor
(1844-1937)

“Toccata” from *Symphony No. 5*

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude
+Please stand in body or spirit*

Worship Notes

The art on the cover is from the “Jesus Mafa” collection. “Jesus Mafa” is a response to the New Testament readings from the Lectionary by a Christian community in Cameroon, Africa. Each of the readings was selected and adapted to dramatic interpretation by the community members. Photographs of their interpretations were made, and these were then transcribed to paintings.

Our flowering cross was made by **Jacy Grannis**.

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

The worship leader is **Jason Steiner**.

The Call to Worship is “They have threatened us with Resurrection” by Julia Esquivel.

The Opening Sentences are adapted from Romans 8:38-39.

The Unison Confession is from “Eastering” by Barbara Pescan from *Morning Watch*.

Kiersten Scott plays the trumpet on “The Day of Resurrection.”

The Prayer of Dedication is from a prayer of Sue Monk Kidd from *When the Heart Waits*.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Paul Tillich.

Education 9:30 - 10:20 a.m.

Adult Education - Join us for a discussion led by Laura Mayo on the meanings of Easter this Sunday in Adult Ed. How do we, as progressive Christians, understand Easter? What sense do we make, if any, of a bodily resurrection? Where do our mysticism and our scientific knowledge intersect and how? Come explore this important story.

Children & Youth Education -

Children & Youth Education will not meet.

- *Trena' Jamison*

Children and Youth Announcements

Events

- **April 21:** Children & Youth Sunday
- **June 9-13, 2024:** McMurry University Youth Camp Passport (please see newsletter for sign-up link).
- **July 27-30, 2024:** Heart of Texas Camp Brownwood, TX Children Camp Passport, (please see newsletter for sign-up link).

Calendar

Sun. Mar 31	7:15am	Labyrinth Walk, Labyrinth
	9:30am	Adult Education, Adult Education classroom on the 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building Children & Youth Education will not meet.
	10:20am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	10:40am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary
	11:00am	Easter Sunday Worship in-person, Sanctuary and via live-stream, YouTube <i>Flowering of the Cross and special music by The Covenant Singers</i> Handbell Rehearsal will not take place.
Tue. Apr 2	1:00pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thurs. Apr 4	10:00am	Community Group, Zoom
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Helpful Information

Childcare: Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

Visitor's Card: If you're a visitor with us, please submit a Visitor's 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 open Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm.

Covenant Recycles: If you do not wish to keep your order of worship, please recycle it by placing it on the stand located in the narthex.

*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

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

Brian Buck, Facilities Coordinator

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jason Steiner, Organist

4949 Caroline Street
Houston, Texas 77004
713-668-8830

www.covenanthouston.org
office@covenanthouston.org

*Covenant Church recognizes the laws of the State of Texas and the rights of its citizens. Consistent with this acknowledgment and with respect for the values of our Church, we also acknowledge that our congregants and visitors seek a safe and comfortable space for worship and celebration. **In that spirit, we request that all firearms be left in a secure place outside of the Church.** We thank God for providing us with the opportunity to worship together and to continue to respect each other as human beings.*