



“He is not here” by artist He Qi

*A Service of Worship for
Easter Sunday
17 April 2022*

Having lived long in time
he lives now in timelessness
without sorrow, made perfect
by our never finished love,
by our compassion and forgiveness,
and by his happiness in receiving
these gifts we give. Here in time
we are added to one another forever.

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

Christopher Teel
(b. 1971)

“Improvisation on 'Victimae Paschali Laudes”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #123

Easter Hymn

“Jesus Christ Is Risen Today”

**Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!**

**Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
That in love we might be brave, Alleluia!**

**Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as God's love, Alleluia!
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!**

*Ushers will seat latecomers

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Opening Sentences

**We believe:
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.**

Scripture Lesson

Luke 24:1-12

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+Response:

Lasst uns erfreuen

**In every land begin the song, To every land the strains belong:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
In cheerful sound all voices raise And fill the world with joyful praise.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Music

Benjamin M. Culli

“That Easter Day with Joy was Bright”

That Easter day with joy was bright:
The sun shone out with fairer light
When to their longing eyes restored,
The apostles saw their risen Lord!

His risen flesh with radiance glowed;
His wounded hands and feet He showed;
Those scars their solemn witness gave
That Christ was risen from the grave.

O Jesus, Light, O Light of gentleness
With constant love our hearts possess
That we may give You all our days,,
The tribute of our grateful praise.

O Lord of all with us abide
In this our joyful Eastertide;
From every weapon death can wield
Your own redeemed forever shield.

All praise to You, O risen Lord,
Now both by heaven and earth adored,
To God Creator equal praise,
And God the Spirit now we raise. Amen.

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**We confess that life has felt like a tightrope walk.
We have inched along, tenuously, cautiously
trying not to break our gaze from the narrow spectrum
of our own small world.
We have been hesitant to look below –
to recognize and respond to those in need.
We have not dared look up –
to acknowledge and join in your work of love.
And so, we creep along, like fearful people,
guarding life as best we can,
taking small comfort in our nets of false security.**

**On this day of celebration –
in the power of the resurrection,
in the hope for life ongoing,
in the love that cannot be undone,
liberate us from such fear.**

**Free us to walk as faithful people,
to run as confident people, and,
to dance as those who have been graced. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

O WALY WALY

“You Give Us Hope This Easter Day”

**You give us hope this Easter Day:
O God, in Christ, you make us new!
As we've been blessed, O Lord, we pray,
May these our gifts bless others, too.**

**When people flee from drought or storm,
When children cry, in need of bread —
May these our gifts keep victims warm
And see that hungry ones are fed.**

**When workers suffer, long-oppressed,
When neighbors seek to organize,
When those abused weep in distress —
May these our gifts change people's lives.**

**When churches seek to tend the earth,
When gardens grow on urban lands —
May these our gifts provide new birth,
Clear-flowing waters, helping hands.**

**O gracious God, you give us life!
This gift is one we're called to share.
May we now serve the risen Christ
Through these our gifts of love and care.**

Invitation

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“Carillon for a Joyous Day”

Douglas E. Wagner

+Prayer of Dedication

**We look at Jesus and we see
what life can be beyond our brokenness.**

**In Jesus we meet God
and a vision of complete and whole humanity
calling us to dare to risk our security
by entering life –**

**knowing another and being known,
loving one another and being loved,
being ourselves and allowing others to be themselves.**

**Because we believe this,
we are committed to living as fully as possible
in this moment, in every moment.**

**We are committed to lives of risk,
of love, of relationships, of honesty,
so that we might find life
in abundance.**

*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

**Resurrection is the refusal to be imprisoned any longer
by history and its long hatreds; it is the determination
to take the first step out of the tomb.**

The logic of resurrection calls us to action.

**If we say we believe in the resurrection
it only has meaning if we are people
who believe in the possibility
of transformed lives, transformed attitudes,
and transformed societies.**

The action is the proof of the belief.

**I can say I believe because I see resurrections now,
see stones rolled away and new possibilities
rising from old attitudes.**

+Closing Hymn #464

Hymn to Joy

“Joyful, Joyful , We Adore Thee”

**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.**

**All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in Thee.**

**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 sunward In the triumph song of life.**

Sung Benediction

G. F. Handel
(1685-1759)

“Hallelujah” from MESSIAH

*You are invited to join the Covenant Singers to sing “Hallelujah.”
You may stand and sing from where you're seated, or you may move forward
to be closer to the choir.*

Words of Blessing

Postlude

Benedetto Marcello
(1686-1739)

“The Heavens Declare the Glory of God”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Thelma Jean Goodrich**.

The Call to Worship is by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Sentences is Romans 8:38-39.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The text of “You Give Us Hope This Easter Day” is by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The offertory, “Carillon for a Joyous Day” is played by our newly formed handbell choir.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from “The Easter Moment” by John Shelby Spong.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Doubts and Loves: What is Left of Christianity* by Richard Holloway.

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 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

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

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