



*A Service of Worship for
Earth Day and the first Sunday of Eastertide
24 April 2022*

We live within models of who we are and what we should do: we have a choice.

Will we see ourselves as individuals with rights and freedoms,
each of us taking from the world all we can get, or as citizens of planet earth,
living sustainably and justly with other human beings and life-forms?

Sallie McFague

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

G.F. Handel
(1685-1759)

“Minuet Finale from Music for the Royal Fireworks”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #115

St. Kevin

“Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain”

+Opening Sentences

**In the beginning was God
In the beginning
The source of all that is
In the beginning
God yearning
God moaning
God laboring
God giving birth
God rejoicing**

**And God loved what she made
And God said,
“It is good.”
And God, knowing that all that is good is shared
Held the earth tenderly in her arms
God yearned for relationship
God longed to share the good earth
And humanity was born in the yearning of God
We were born to share the earth**

Scripture Lesson

John 20:19-31

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

*Ushers will seat latecomers

+Please stand in body or spirit

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!

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

All of us tend to hold certainty dearer than truth.

We want to learn only what we already know;

we want to become only what we already are

and doubts, Lord knows, are important

for the development of religious faith if,

with St. Augustine, you “believe in thinking

and wish to think in believing.”

But if doubts are important, wonder is all-important.

None of us scoffs at the stars, nor do we sneer at sunsets.

Yet we depreciate so much else, it seems almost inevitable that,

as civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines.

We forget that both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge

are deeply rooted in the soil of mystery.

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Music

“Because of Thy Great Bounty”

Leon A. Hoffmeister

Proclamation

+Hymn

Aurelia

“When Thomas Heard from Jesus”

**When Thomas heard from Jesus, “Now come and follow me,”
He surely went with gladness, for there was much to see.
He witnessed Jesus’ teaching and saw his healing touch;
He found a faith to guide him, a friend he loved so much.**

**When Jesus spoke of heaven, bold Thomas dared to say,
“We don't know where you're going! How can we know the way?”
He wanted understanding of what he could not see.
Then Jesus reassured him, “The way is here — with me.”**

**When crowds began to murmur and leaders raised their cry,
Brave Thomas spoke out firmly, “Let's go with him and die.”
He ate at Jesus’ table, partaking wine and bread;
Yet later with the others, he saw the cross and fled.**

**What joy on Easter evening when many saw the Lord!
Yet Thomas was not with them and would not trust their word.
When Christ appeared before him, his doubts were quickly gone;
He gladly knew that evening the joy of Easter dawn.**

Invitation

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Christopher Teel
(b. 1971)

“Improvisation”

⁺Prayer of Dedication

**Jesus' death and resurrection becomes
a pattern for our own spiritual evolution.
As we die to all the old narratives, beliefs,
and assumptions that keep us attached to
our small, egotistical selves, we are raised
into a larger, broader, and more encompassing Self
– an Easter Self of cosmic proportions, motivated
not by fear and mere survival but by the prospect
of being an agent of sacred, evolutionary intelligence,
capable of being a source of new life and the presence
of love that is always rising up in the service of life.**

⁺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 touch this strength, our power, who we are in
the world, when we are most fully in touch with
one another and with the world.**

**There is no doubt in my mind that, in so doing,
we are participants in ongoing incarnation,
bringing god to life in the world.**

**For god is nothing other than the eternally creative
source of our relational power, our common strength,
a god whose movement is to empower, bringing us
into our own together, a god whose name in history is love
which is just, mutually empowering, and co-creative.**

“Hymn of Promise”

Unison

1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o -
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i -

tree; in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be
 dy; there's a dawn in ev - ery dark - ness bring - ing hope to you and
 ty; in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni -

free! In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to
 me. From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter -
 ty; in our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to -

be, un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 y, un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 ry, un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

Benediction

Postlude

G.F. Handel
(1685-1759)

“Allegro Maestoso from Water Music”

Worship Notes

Bill Kline is our guest proclaimer.

Karen Kline is our guest Music Director.

The worship leader is **Richard Johnson**.

The Call to Worship is “Pray for Peace” from Poems by Ellen Bass.

The Opening Sentences are from *A Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation* by Carter Heyward.

Joyce Courtois, alto, is the soloist.

The Unison Confession is from *The Heart Is a Little to the Left* by William Sloane Coffin.

The text of “When Thomas Heard from Jesus” is by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *If Darwin Prayed* by Bruce Sanguin.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Touching our Strength* by Carter Heyward.

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

Church Business Meeting - Adult Education

Church Council invites you to the first business meeting of the year this Sunday during Adult Education starting at 9:30am. We invite you to join us by Zoom, through the usual Adult Education link, or in person in the Adult Education classroom on the second floor of the Fellowship Building. You will hear reports from members of our staff and leadership of the Diaconate, Council, and committees.

In addition, minor changes to the by-laws will be proposed to revitalize the Endowment Committee following a generous gift from Mary Lee and Sidney Burrus. Highlights are to rename it the Endowment Fund Board, to modify selection of the three-member team and their terms of service, and to enlist the service of a professional money manager. The current and proposed by-laws can be found here.

Children & Youth Education - Huff Fellowship Hall

Inquirer's Class Beginning on May 1

Interested in learning more about Covenant or in becoming a member? Participate in Covenant's Inquirer's Class. This course will meet for five sessions to explore the history of Covenant, its theology, worship traditions, programs for children and youth, organizational structure, and more. At the conclusion of the course, the inquirer is invited to become a member of Covenant. The next set of classes will take place on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 at Covenant. The class will run from May 1 to June 12. (We will not meet on May 29 or June 5.) If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please contact deacon Lisa Spiro (lisamspiro@gmail.com or 832-341-0380).

- Deacon Lisa Spiro

Children and Youth Announcements

- Mentor/Youth Moving Forward Planning Meeting May 8 at 12:30pm
- Children and Youth Auction May 15 at 12:30pm

We are approaching the annual Children and Youth auction. If you have any handmade items or any experiences you would like to donate, please feel free to reach out to me or anyone on the Children and Youth committee.

- Trena' Jamison

Calendar

Sun, Apr 24	9:30 am	Business Meeting and Children & Youth Sunday School
	10:20 am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Sanctuary
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tue, Apr 26	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thur, Apr 28	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom
Thur, Apr 28	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Helpful Information

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 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

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Christopher Teel, Organist

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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.