



“Ethiopian Eunuch” - artist: Paul Goodnight

*A Service of Worship for
Sunday of Eastertide
9 May 2021*

Douglas Steere, a Quaker teacher, says that the ancient question,
“Who am I?” inevitably leads to a deeper one,
“Whose am I?”—because there is no identity outside of relationship.

You can't be a person by yourself.

To ask “Whose am I?” is to extend the question
far beyond the little self-absorbed self,
and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you?

To whom are you accountable?

To whom do you answer?

Whose life is altered by your choices?

With whose life, whose lives, is your own all bound up,
inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways.

Victoria Safford

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour
Silence is kept

Prelude

Paul Manz

“Aria”

Call to Worship

†Opening Prayer

**Listen to me, God,
as a Mother,
and hold me warm,
and forgive me.
Soften my experiences
into wisdom,
my pride
into acceptance,
my longing
into trust,
and soften me
into love
and to others
and to you.**

Scripture Lesson

Acts 8:26-40 and 1 John 4:7-21

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Bunessan

“Baptized in Water”

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

**When we scale, at last, the walls
which our hardened hearts have built,
then we come face-to-face, finally,
with the blessedness of one another.**

**Then we see that these struggling
fellow pilgrims with whom we share this space
are no longer robbers, pirates, and thieves,
but deepest friends, most intimate souls.**

**To see this Creation with the eyes of God
means seeing with the eyes of peace;
it means finding ways to bind up the broken,
even when the world says it can't be done.**

**To scale these walls of alienation and despair
means living our lives in truth, with justice;
neither denying the holy gifts of our hearts and souls,
nor hoarding them like miser's gold.**

**It is the simplest call of all, in essence:
To open ourselves to God,
we first open ourselves to one another.
Each day we live, in hope, the deepest possibilities
of our dreams and of our visions in this life,
we dwell as well in heaven.**

**Then it is that we will turn and greet one another,
knowing at long last the simple blessing
of standing fully in the presence of another true messiah,
face-to-face with one like us:
a beaming, holy child of God.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Joachim Stutschewsky

“Dance”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Prayer

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**In joining this church, having passed through ritual waters or not,
we dedicate ourselves to being a vital part of this community.
We understand that we are God's children,
That we are loved.**

May thoughts of baptism on this day remind us of who and whose we are.

*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

**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.

Benediction

Postlude

Johann Pachelbel

“Tocatta in E Minor”

Worship Notes

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

The prelude and postlude are played by Andrew Bowen, organ.

The Call to Worship is from *Touch Holiness*, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi.

The Opening Prayer is from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder.

The Unison Confession is from “Meeting the Messiah” by Jeffrey Symynkywicz.

"Dance," **Susan Wegner**, cello; **Karen Kline**, piano.

The Prayer of Dedication is by **Laura Mayo**.

The Affirmation of Faith is “Love Abides” by Barbara Pescan.

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

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

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: [Covenant Gatherings](#)

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. May 9	9:00 a.m.	Worship Online
	10:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 am.	Coffee Time, Zoom Meeting
Mon. May 10	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Wed. May 12	7:00 p.m.	Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting
Thur. May 13	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. May 13	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. May 14	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 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.