



*A Service of Worship for
22 August 2021*

Hope has two beautiful daughters.
Their names are anger and courage;
 anger at the way things are,
and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.

St. Augustine

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

“Chaconne”

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #420

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

Cwm Rhondda

+Opening Sentences

**God,
send the gift of your Spirit, to fill this place
and ourselves
and the world.**

**Touch us
with truth
that burns like fire,
with beauty
that moves us like the wind;**

**and set us free, God,
free to try new ways of living;
free to forgive ourselves and others;
free to love and laugh and sing;
free to lay aside our burden of security;
free to join the battle for justice and peace; free to see and listen and wonder again
at the gracious mystery of things and persons;**

**free to be,
to give,
to receive,
to rejoice as a child of your Spirit.**

**Ushers will seat latecomers*

+Please stand in body or spirit

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children: Back to School Blessing

Leader: Will students, of all ages, please stand. We are proud of you. We support who you are and who you are becoming. We pray that as you learn and grow you will develop compassionate hearts and minds.

People: As your faith community, we pledge to be with you on your educational journey. We will do all that we are able to ensure that your schools are positive places filled with hope and the resources you need as you pursue your education. We acknowledge that this is a particularly challenging time and we want you to know that you are loved, you are held in our prayers, you matter to us.

Leader: Will the teachers, administrators, counselors, school volunteers, support staff, and all who work in education, please stand. Being involved in education is a high calling. Those who work with our children help shape the future. We give thanks for everyone who works in education.

People: We celebrate your calling and pledge to support you and others in our communities who are involved in education. We acknowledge that this is a particularly challenging time and we want you to know that you are loved, you are held in our prayers, you matter to us.

Leader: As we recognize those who work in schools, we recognize as well those who work with students at home. Will parents or guardians of our students, please stand. Education involves a partnership between school, home, and community. The support of parents and guardians is essential to a student's success. Today we recognize you for the support you give the students in your home.

People: We pledge our support to parents and guardians. We will work to encourage and strengthen those in our church who provide care for students. We acknowledge that this is a particularly challenging time and we want you to know that you are loved, you are held in our prayers, you matter to us.

All: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord's face shine upon you and give you peace. Amen.

*+Response:

Jesus Loves Me

*Jesus loves me still today, Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give Peace and love to all who live.
Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.*

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**It would be much easier, Jesus,
to ignore the hard truths around us:
the widening gap
between rich and poor,
the consistency with which the powerful
get their way,
the bending of rules and the self-enrichment
of the connected and influential,
the lack of adequate care, protection and resources
for the most vulnerable among us;
we would rather not see these signs.**

**It would be much easier if we could just pretend everything was alright,
if we could prophesy goodness and hope,
and ignore the despair and evil;
if we didn't have to offend the status quo,
or challenge the comfortable;
if we could convince ourselves that the cross,
was just a one time thing –
your calling, not ours.**

**But, we can't do this, Jesus, because we know too much;
your Gospel has captured us and opened our eyes,
and we have become dedicated to love,
the love that must speak for the voiceless,
the love that must challenge injustice,
the love that draws lines of division
between truth and denial,
between compassion and expediency.**

**Give us the courage to acknowledge what we see,
to name the signs of the times,
to disrupt the 'way things are'
in the name of what should be.**

Amen.

Words of Assurance

Music

“Lead Me, Lord”

G. F. Handel

Proclamation

Silent Reflection

Hymn #314

Bridegroom

“Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song”

Verse 1 sung by a soloist
Verses 2 and 3, congregation

Farewell Blessing for Angie & Jeff Nobles

Leader: Angie and Jeff Nobles have been involved in Covenant life for more than 20 years. Their daughters, Audrey and Claire, likewise have been part of our shared life. Jeff and Angie have been deacons, served on council, been active in committees, served as mentors, proclaimed, led worship, taught Sunday School, and provided leadership, guidance, and assistance.

Angie & Jeff: Covenant has changed in many ways since we arrived in 2000, and so have we. We have matured, built deep friendships, and experienced rewarding growth. Now our journey leads us to Georgetown, where we will be nearer to family, have more time for self-care, and plan to pursue new and wonderful adventures.

People: Jeff, you have shared so much of yourself with us. You are an excellent listener who has many times helped us to hear each other. You have volunteered your time and, along with your family, embodied hospitality. Angie, you, too have given so much of yourself to us. You have willingly shared your professional skills and been a gentle source of comfort. Your home has been the location of many church events and your hospitality has enabled us to gather in times of celebration and in times of mourning. Thank you. It is hard to imagine being church without both of you.

Leader: You will be greatly missed and we reassure ourselves that while we will no longer share a city, we will always share the love and friendship that has been built over these many years. And so, now we give you our blessing: Wherever God leads you, may you go with God.

Angie & Jeff: We want to express our gratitude to the people here for what you have shared with us. We deeply appreciate that Covenant has been a rich community to our family for the last 21 years. We have made many lifelong friendships here and have felt nurtured and appreciated for who we are. Our daughters, Audrey and Claire, spent a good part of their growing-up years at Covenant--receiving mentoring, education, fellowship and love--important to their becoming who they are today. Covenant has enriched our faith in so many ways, with its intellectual honesty, its challenges to the way we think about God and the world, and its acceptance of our own ideas. Covenant has shown us ways to involve ourselves in the world and to work for peace

and justice. We thank all of you—the saints of Covenant who now live in our memories, and you who are sharing your lives with us today—for these precious gifts.

People: May you find where you go: a place of acceptance, a place to worship, a place to serve, a place of joy, a place of love. You are a part of us, and so we will continue to share in your lives, even when distance separates us.

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

G. F. Handel

“Allemande”

+Prayer of Dedication

**Jesus abhors both passivity and violence as a response to evil.
The “peace” the gospel brings is never the absence of conflict,
but an ineffable divine reassurance within the heart of conflict;
a peace that surpasses understanding.**

+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

**Nonviolence must not be misconstrued as a way of avoiding conflict.
Christians have all too often called for “nonviolence”
when they really meant tranquility.**

**Nonviolence, in fact, seeks out conflict,
elicits conflict, exacerbates conflict,
in order to bring it out into the open
and lance its poisonous sources.**

**It is not idealistic or sentimental about evil;
it does not coddle or cajole aggressors,
but move against perceived injustice proactively.**

+Closing Hymn

“Go Walk with God”

Tallis’ Canon

**Go walk with God in all you do,
And may God's love bring joy to you.
May gifts of peace fill all your days,
And may God's truth guide you always.**

**O may the grace of Christ our Lord,
The wondrous love that comes from God,
The Spirit's fellowship now be
God's gifts to you eternally.**

**We thank you, Lord, for life to share
Through learning, serving, praise and prayer.
And when we say good-bye to friends,
We thank you, Lord: Love never ends.**

Benediction

Postlude

“Courante”

G. F. Handel

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Lisa Spiro**.

The prelude, offertory, and postlude are played by **Karen Klein**, piano.

The Call to Worship is from Marianne Hachten Cotter in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings for Family, Individual, and Small Group Worship*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Opening Sentences are by Ted Loder in *Guerrillas of Grace*.

The Unison Confession is adapted from John van der Laar.

“Lead Me, Lord” is sung by **Joyce Courtois**.

The text of "Go Walk with God" is by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is from Walter Wink.

The Affirmation of Faith is from Walter Wink.

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

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

The Adult Education class for the next two Sundays, August 22 and 29, will feature a return visit by UH Professor Jesse Rainbow, one of our best-received guest speakers in recent years. Professor Rainbow is teaching a class this semester on the Kings of Israel and Judah and will draw on that material for these classes. This will fit well with our recent increased attention to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and can be guaranteed to add to our knowledge of generally less familiar but important and fascinating parts of the history of the people of ancient Israel.

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

Announcements

Sunday schedule for this Sunday:

Adult Education (Zoom) 9am

Worship in-person (Covenant) 11am

Worship live-stream 11am (<https://youtu.be/aLSFXDDAXvg>)

Calendar

Sun. Aug 22	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 a.m.	Worship live-stream
	12:00 p.m.	Business Meeting, Covenant
Mon. Aug 23	1:00 p.m.	No Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Aug 26	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Aug 26	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Aug 27	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
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.