



*A Service of Worship for
Second Sunday of Lent
25 February 2024*

Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again.

The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.

The big question is whether you are going to be able to say
a hearty yes to your adventure.

Joseph Campbell

Life consists in learning how to live one's own,
spontaneous, freewheeling:
to do this one must recognize what is one's own—
be familiar and at home with oneself.

This means basically learning who one is,
and learning what one has to offer to the contemporary world,
and then learning how to make that offering valid.

Thomas Merton

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #343

Beecher

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”

**Called as partners in Christ’s service, called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring to fulfill God’s chosen end.**

**Christ’s example, Christ’s inspiring, Christ’s clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer, all God’s people, young and old,
Blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.**

**Thus new patterns for Christ’s mission, in a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other’s burdens, breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues free and fair.**

**So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life
That surround each person’s sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.**

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the prelude*

+Opening Sentences

**I would like to step out of my insular shell
and come into contact with our present reality.**

**I would like to feel the rain on my face
and breathe the fresh air.**

**I would like to wade into the waters
that the spirit has troubled and stirred.**

**I would like the water drenching me
to baptize me into a new life.**

**I would like to become a citizen
not of somewhere else but of here.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Acts 6:1-7; History of Covenant

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+Response:

THE SERVANT SONG

The musical score for 'The Servant Song' is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. The lyrics 'We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, We are trav - 'lers' are written below the first staff. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values. The lyrics 'on the road; We are here to help each oth - er' are written below the second staff. The third staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues with quarter notes and half notes. The lyrics 'Walk the mile and bear _____ the load.' are written below the third staff. The score ends with a double bar line.

Text: 87 87; Richard Gillard, b. 1953.

Music: SERVANT SONG; Richard Gillard; harm. by Betty Pulkingham, b. 1928.

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Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

God of Grace-

We confess:

You call us, but we do not want to hear.

You call us, but it sounds so unreasonable.

You call us, but we seem so ill-equipped.

You call us, but we are not ready.

You call us . . .

God of Grace-

We pray:

Pursue each one of us;

be tenacious in your calling, for your sake and for our world's sake.

Words of Assurance

Music

Ron Nelson

“Cause Us, O Lord”

*Cause us, O Lord our God, to lie down each night in peace,
and to awaken to renewed life and strength.*

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

*Lord, help us to order our lives by Thy council,
lead us in the paths of righteousness.*

Lord, be Thou a shield about us, protect us.

Save our world from sorrow, from hate, and from war.

Curb Thou within us the will to do evil.

Shelter us beneath the shadow of Thy wings.

Amen.

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

“All Who Love and Serve Your City”

**All who love and serve your city, All who bear its daily stress,
All who cry for peace and justice, All who curse and all who bless:**

**In your day of wealth and plenty, Wasted work and wasted play,
Call to mind the word of Jesus, “You must work while it is day.”**

**For all days are days of judgment, And the Lord is waiting still,
Drawing near a world that spurns Him, Offering peace from Calvary's hill.**

**Risen Lord, shall yet the city Be the city of despair?
Come today, our judge, our glory. Be its name “The Lord is there!”**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

“‘Adagio’ from Trio Sonata No. 4, BWV 525”

⁺Prayer of Dedication

May I be at peace, more patient with myself.

**Let me live within the questions that promise no answers
but only signal the mystery that gave them birth.**

**Let me turn from every pettiness of the heart,
willing to see and accept that the world does not revolve around me.**

**Let the grief, the pain, and the nameless trouble that overcomes me
also open me to feel what others have felt.**

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

**To realize our human condition
and fulfill our calling to wholeness and holiness of life
calls for a life of continual transformations
of new beginnings and of growing up.
Conversion involves changes in the way we look at the world,
at others, at ourselves,
and at the things we think matter.
To turn and live in response to the call of God is to be human.
It is a continuing process.
So is our growth in maturity of faith and life.
We need to grow into our new perceptions.
We need to realize our true human condition as a chosen, redeemed
people.
It is a slow and gradual pilgrimage of beginnings and endings.**

⁺Closing Hymn #434

Kingsfold

“Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples”

**Today we all are called to be disciples of the Lord,
To help to set the captive free, make plowshare out of sword,
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst, make love and peace our fast,
To serve the poor and homeless first, our ease and comfort last.**

**God made the world and at its birth ordained our human race
To live as stewards of the earth, responding to God’s grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud, we sow not peace but strife,
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud that threatens all of life.**

**Pray justice may come rolling down as in a mighty stream,
With righteousness in field and town to cleanse us and redeem
For God is longing to restore an earth where conflicts cease,
A world that was created for a harmony of peace.**

**May we in service to our God act out the living word,
And walk the road the saints have trod till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we give thanks in one accord
To God who calls us all to be disciples of the Lord.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Benediction

*Postlude

David Lasky
(b. 1957)

“Trumpet Tune on ‘Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!’”

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude*

+Please stand in body or spirit

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Jeannie Gambill**.

The Call to Worship is from *The Shimmering Hours* by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Sentences are adapted from and inspired by the sermon, “Not Somewhere Else But Here,” in *Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now* by Rebecca Parker.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The Prayer of Dedication is from the *1997 Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Worship Materials Collection* by George Kimmich Beach.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *The Spiritual Life: Learning East and West* by John Westerhoff III.

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

Adult Education - Ginger Clarkson, the Community Dharma Leader of Insight Meditation Houston, will give an introduction to walking meditation practice and lead those who are interested on a Labyrinth walk, weather permitting. Otherwise we will walk in the Fellowship Hall. Those on zoom can join for a seated meditation or walk around their homes. Ginger has attended many month-long silent retreats led by her principal Vipassana teacher, Jack Kornfield. Her current dharma teacher is Koshin Paley Ellison at the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, where she received Clinical Pastoral Education training to serve as a hospice chaplain at Omega House in Houston.

- *Ann Stout*

Children & Youth Education -

Children's Lesson

Title: Wild Mountain John

Lesson: Filling Our Minds with Goodness

Youth Lesson

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9

- *Trena' Jamison*

Children and Youth Announcements

Children & Youth Auction

Today at 12:15pm, Huff Fellowship Hall

It's time for the Children & Youth Auction. Funds raised during the auction help us provide transportation and chaperons for summer camp, our Sunday school curriculum, items for our annual Easter Egg hunt, and other events we put on throughout the year. Some of the things we have up for auction this year are

- Strawberry Rhubarb pies made by Susan Wegner
- Four Course Meal for Six hosted by the Neff and Alexander Family
- Poetry Books written by our very own Kathleen Cook
- Private Rowing Lesson at the Bay Area Rowing Club given by Bill Howze
- A trip to the zoo with a PhD biologist hosted by David Ramsey

We have so much more, so please come out and support our children and youth at Covenant Church.

Events

- **February 25: CHILDREN & YOUTH AUCTION**
- **March 29:** Youth Lock-In
- **March 30:** Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- **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. Feb 25	9:30am	Adult Education, Adult Education classroom on the 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30am	Children & Youth Education, Room B, 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary/Children's Area
	10:20am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	10:40am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary
	11:00am	Worship in-person, Sanctuary and via live-stream, YouTube
	12:15pm	Children & Youth Auction, Huff Fellowship Hall
Tue. Feb 27	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thurs. Feb 29	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom

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

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*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.*