



*A Service of Worship for
8 August 2021*

All right. Try this,
Then. Every body
I know and care for,
And every body
Else is going
To die in a loneliness
I can't imagine and a pain
I don't know. We had
To go on living. We
Untangled the net, we slit
The body of this fish
Open from the hinge of the tail
To a place beneath the chin
I wish I could sing of.
I would just as soon we let
The living go on living.
An old poet whom we believe in
Said the same thing, and so
We paused among the dark cattails and prayed
For the muskrats,
For the ripples below their tails,
For the little movements that we knew the crawdads were making under water,
For the right-hand wrist of my cousin who is a policeman
We prayed for the game warden's blindness.
We prayed for the road home.
We ate the fish.
There must be something very beautiful in my body,
I am so happy.

James Wright

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

Frederic Chopin

“Prelude in B minor, Op. 28, No.6”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #408

Germany

“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life” **Verses 2, 3, and 5**

+Opening Prayer

**O God who is love,
when you seem so far away from us,
remind us to reach within
to the fountain of feelings at the core of ourselves
and there, let us find you.**

**When you seem so unconcerned,
so massive, so impassive,
so insulated by your power,
so distant by your expansiveness,
remind us to reach out
to the hand of a child,
to the face of a friend,
and there let us find you.**

**And in times when we have nothing to feel
and there is no one to touch,
let us never close our hearts or our hands,
but always, let us be open to you,
and let us be open today; here and now. Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Ecclesiastes 1:2-11, 2:18-23, 9:9-11, 12:8

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

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

**During this past week, I took much for granted:
the body's health, the mind's resilience, my strength of heart and will.
These are among the countless gifts and blessings that are my daily portion.
I pray that I may learn to give thanks for them, and never to take them for granted.**

**During this past week, I was sometimes thoughtful, sometimes self-centered.
I pray that I may better meet the days to come,
with growing consideration for those I love.**

**During this past week I thought little, or not at all
of the deep harmony I seek within myself and others.
I pray that here and now I may come to recognize that harmony as the Way of God.**

Words of Assurance

Music

“I Am the Bread of Life”

Simon Lole

Proclamation

Hymn #408

Germany

“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life” **Verses 1, 5, and 6**

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Invitation

Offering

Offertory

“Day by Day”

Oscar Ahnfelt

+Prayer of Dedication

**When we are mindful, fully living in each moment.
we may realize that everyone and everything around us is our home.
We see the trees as our home, the air as our home,
the blue sky as our home, the air we breathe as our home.
This can only be done in the here and now.**

*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

**When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.**

+Closing Hymn

“All of Life is Filled With Wonder”

Hymn to Joy

**All of life is filled with wonder, so we thank you, God of love —
For the crash of evening thunder, clearing clouds, then stars above;
For the night that turns to glowing as we feel the morning mist,
God, we praise and thank you, knowing every day we're truly blessed.**

**For the joy of daily waking, for the gift of each new day,
For the smell of fresh bread baking, for the sound of children's play,
For the ways we seek to serve you as we work and volunteer,
God, we humbly praise and thank you for your presence with us here.**

**For the ways we're blessed with plenty — love and laughter, neighbors, friends,
Nature's wonders, seasons' bounty, life in you that never ends,
For the ones who've gone before us, giving witness to your way —
We rejoice in all you give us every moment, every day.**

**For your love in times of trouble, for your peace when things are tough,
For your help when hardships double, for your grace that is enough,
For a stranger's gentle kindness, for a doctor's healing skill —
God, we thank you that you bless us, and you bless your world as well.**

Benediction

Postlude

arr. Sandra Eithun

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Van Wheeler**.

The guest proclaimer is **Jacy Grannis**.

The banner was created by **Nancy Henry**.

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

The Call to Worship is by Arthur Waskow in “Retelling the Rainbow” reprinted in *Life Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

The Opening Prayer is *Touch Holiness* by Ruth C. Duck.

The Unison Confession is from *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook from the Central Conference of American Rabbis*.

Dale Thomas is the soloist on “I Am the Bread of Life.”

The text of “All of Life is Filled With Wonder” is by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from a prayer in *Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

The Affirmation of Faith is “The Peace of Wild Things” by Wendell Berry.

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

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

In two previous excellent lectures on the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, Yale Professor Christine Hayes introduced and discussed several versions of the Documentary Hypothesis, the view that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) was not written by Moses or in his lifetime, but are an edited compilation from several sources, the most important called J,E,D, and P—more commonly just JEDP. For the Adult Education class on Sunday, August 8, she describes the three identifiable bodies of law found in JE (Exodus), P (Leviticus and Numbers), and D (Deuteronomy), and points to similarities and differences between Israelite law and other Ancient Near Eastern legal traditions such as the Code of Hammurabi. She explains distinctive features of Israelite law as flowing from the claim of divine authorship. If your efforts to read all the way through the Bible ground to a halt when you hit Leviticus, this will provide a more interesting lens for appreciating that book and the legalistic passages in Numbers.

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 8	9:00 a.m.	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	11:00 a.m.	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 a.m.	Worship live-stream
Mon. Aug 9	1:00 p.m.	Book Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Aug 12	10:00 a.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Aug 12	8:00 p.m.	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Fri. Aug 13	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.