



*A Service of Worship for  
15 May 2022*

*Blessing in a Time of Violence*

Which is to say this blessing  
is always.

Which is to say there is no place  
this blessing does not long  
to cry out in lament,  
to weep its words in sorrow,  
to scream its lines  
in sacred rage.

Which is to say there is no day  
this blessing ceases  
to whisper into the ear  
of the dying, the despairing,  
the terrified.

Which is to say there is no moment  
this blessing refuses to sing itself  
into the heart of the hated  
and the hateful,  
the victim and the victimizer,  
with every last ounce of hope it has.

Which is to say there is none  
that can stop it, none that can halt its course,  
none that will still its cadence,  
none that will delay its rising,  
none that can keep it from springing forth  
from the mouths of us who hope,  
from the hands of us who act,  
from the hearts of us who love,  
from the feet of us who will not cease  
our stubborn, aching  
marching, marching

until this blessing has spoken  
its final word, until this blessing  
has breathed its benediction  
in every place, in every tongue:

Peace.  
Peace.  
Peace.

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Ringling in the hour  
Silence is kept

Prelude

William Walton  
(1902-1983)

“Passacaglia”

Call to Worship

\*+Opening Hymn #348

Huntsville

“Christan Women, Christian Men”  
Verses 1, 2, & 4

+Opening Sentences

Leader: To your table you bid us come.  
You have set the places, you have poured the wine,  
and there is always room, you say, for one more.

**All: And so we come.**

**From the streets and from the alleys  
we come.**

**From the deserts and from the hills  
we come.**

**From the ravages of poverty and from the palaces of privilege  
we come.**

**Running, limping, carried,  
we come.**

Leader: We are bloodied with our wars, we are wearied with our wounds,  
we carry our dead within us, and we reckon with their ghosts.

We hold the seeds of healing, we dream of a new creation, we know the things that make  
for peace, and we struggle to give them wings.

**All: And yet, to your table we come.  
Hungering for your bread, we come;  
thirsting for your wine, we come;  
singing your song in every language,  
speaking your name in every tongue,  
in conflict and in communion,  
in discord and in desire, we come  
O God of Wisdom,  
we come.**

\*Ushers will seat latecomers

+Please stand in body or spirit

Scripture Lesson

Acts 9:36-43

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

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

**In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the dark.**

**If we decide to leave the riddles unanswered,**

**that is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that, too, is a choice:**

**but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril.**

**Each must act as they think best; and if they are wrong,**

**so much the worse for them.**

**We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow**

**and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now**

**and then of paths which may be deceptive.**

**If we stand still we shall be frozen to death.**

**If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces.**

**We do not certainly know whether there is any right one.**

**What must we do? 'Be strong and of good courage.'**

**Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes.**

**If death ends all, we cannot meet death better.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Margaret R. Tucker

“The Myriad Pieces”

*For Fran Avera with admiration and gratitude for the  
beautiful music she has created for 50 years as  
Minister of Music, Covenant Church, Houston, Texas.*

When the mirror shattered  
Splaying light in a thousand directions  
I thought not of bad luck  
But of how beautifully it sparkled,  
As on a starry night I think of  
The sky's resplendence  
Rather than the vast emptiness  
Of the spaces between.

When the communion loaf breaks,  
It can never be unbroken,  
Nor can the myriad pieces of God  
Be unfastened within us,  
Refashioned into One,  
Until the last glimmer gloaming  
Of farthest-flung star  
Winks at no one and all are called  
home.

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

William Walton

“Cantabile”

+Prayer of Dedication

**In a real sense this is a great time to be alive.  
Therefore, I am not yet discouraged about the future.  
Granted that the easygoing optimism of yesterday is impossible.  
Granted that we face a world crisis  
which leaves us standing so often  
amid the surging murmur of life's restless sea.  
But every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities.  
It can spell either salvation or doom.  
In a dark, confused world  
the Kingdom of God may yet reign  
in the hearts of people.**

\*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.*

## THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Communion Hymn #421

Wareham

“The Church of Christ in Every Age”  
Verses 1 & 2

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

*If you would like to take communion, please move outside. Deacons will be serving communion on the garden side and labyrinth side of the church. Our communion elements include both wine and water and gluten free and vegan crackers. All are always welcome to communion at Covenant.*

Communion Hymn #421

Wareham

“The Church of Christ in Every Age”  
Verses 3 & 4

+Affirmation of Faith

**Let us offer the world the best flowers and fruits of our practice:**

**lucidity, solidity, brotherhood and sisterhood,  
understanding, and compassion.**

**Let us give rise to the determination**

**to look deeply into the nature of fear, anger, hatred,  
and violence and to give rise to the eyes of compassion.**

**Breathing in, we are aware of violence within ourselves and within the world.**

**Breathing out, we are determined to look with the eyes of compassion  
at the violence within ourselves and the world.**

**We know that with the energy of mindfulness, concentration,  
and awakened wisdom, we can lessen violence every day.**

**We know that responding to violence with compassion is our only path.**

+Closing Hymn #418

Ich Halte Treulich Still

“God, Bless Your Church with Strength!”

Benediction

Postlude

William Walton

“March”

## Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Ruddy Cravens**.

The Call to Worship is “Wheat” by B.H. Fairchild.

The Opening sentences are from *In Wisdom's Path: Discovering the Sacred in Every Season* by Jan Richardson.

The Unison Confession is by Fitz-James Stephen.

The text of “The Myriad Pieces” is by **Eric Avera**.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” in *Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

### **Education 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

Adult Education - This week Ted Estess will continue to share reflections from his life's journey memoir *Fishing Spirit Lake*. - *Bill Kline*

Children & Youth Education - Room B, 2nd floor of the Fellowship Hall Building

### **Children and Youth Announcements**

**May 15: Annual Children and Youth Auction, Huff Fellowship Hall at 12:30pm**

**June 5: Youth Moving Forward Planning Meeting**

If you are available, please join us. It will be a great conversation.

**June 11: Youth Church Lock-in**

Since we will not be attending Youth camp this year, we have planned a youth lock-in at the church. We are planning a pool party for the Youth this summer as well so please be on the lookout for that information.

**June 18-22: Children Camp**

Children's camp will occur at Disciples Crossing in Athens, TX.

### **Announcements**

**Facilitated Mission/Vision Conversation: May 22**

We are excited to ask you to mark your calendars for a mission/vision workshop on Sunday, May 22 right after church. A light lunch will be provided. We are hoping to provide a way to Zoom for those of you who want to participate but are not ready to be present in person.

Church consultant Leah Taylor will be leading us through a workshop specifically for churches in transition called Holy Excavation: an Introduction to Strategic Discernment. Among the questions we will seek to answer are: What are the values which currently guide our ministry? What is the evidence that we are living out our values? What is our shared dream with the divine for our faith community? Who is God calling us to be now?

We hope you will come! PLEASE let us know if you are planning to attend. We want to make sure we have enough food for our lunch and the supplies we need for the workshop. You can sign up through the link in your newsletter, the link in the email about worship, or you can email the office ([office@covenanthouston.org](mailto:office@covenanthouston.org)).

### Calendar

Sun, May 15	9:30 am	Adult Education, Adult Education classroom on the 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30 am	Children & Youth Sunday School, Room B, 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building
	9:30 am	Handbell Rehearsal, Children's Classroom, Sanctuary Building
	9:30 am	Inquirer's Class, Sanctuary
	10:20 am	Hospitality, Huff Fellowship Hall
	10:40 am	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Sanctuary
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
	12:30 pm	Children & Youth Auction, Huff Fellowship Hall
Tue, May 17	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom
Thur, May 19	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom
Thur, May 19	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](mailto:Office@covenanthouston.org).

**Newsletter:** To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to [office@covenanthouston.org](mailto: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  
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  
Christopher Teel, Organist

*4949 Caroline Street  
Houston, Texas 77004  
713-668-8830  
[office@covenanthouston.org](mailto:office@covenanthouston.org)  
[www.covenanthouston.org](http://www.covenanthouston.org)*

*Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.*

*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.*