



*A Service of Worship for
24 January 2021*

There is so much I want to say,
as if the saying could prepare you for this path,
as if there were anything I could offer
that would make your way
less circuitous, more smooth.

Once you step out you will see for yourself
how nothing could have made you ready for this
road that will take you
from what you know now
to what you cannot perceive
except, perhaps, in your dreaming
or as it gives a glimpse in prayer.

But I can tell you this journey
is not about miles.
It is not about how far
you can walk or how fast.

It is about what you will do with this moment,
this star that blazes in your sky
though no one else might see.

So open your heart
to these shimmering hours
by which your path is made.
Open your eyes
to the light that shines
on what you will need
to see.

Open your hands
to those who go with you,
those seen
and those known only
by their blessing,
their benediction
of the road that is
your own.

Jan Richardson

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour
Silence is kept

Prelude

arr. Cindy Berry

“Be Still, My Soul”

Call to Worship

+Opening Prayer

**From the midst of our real lives with their very real problems,
We come to seek courage and strength from the presence
of God and the support of one another.**

**As persons who love imperfectly and are loved imperfectly,
We come to be renewed by the perfect love of God,
proclaimed in this community of love and faith.**

As persons who never fully live up their high calling in Jesus,

**We come to be encouraged to do our best for
one more week.**

**Let us worship, with hearts open to the love of God,
with hands outstretched to one another, and with whole
selves willing to accept the cost and joy of being Christ’s
disciples. Amen.**

Scripture Lesson

Mark 1:14-20

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Music

“Hush!”

arr. Alice Parker

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

**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:**

**Like the hound of heaven, pursue each one of us;
be tenacious in your calling, for your sake and for our world's sake.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Hymn

Stuttgart

“Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult”

Prayer

Invitation

+Prayer of Dedication

**Trusting God is not an assurance that whatever we do,
all will work out well. It is instead confidence
that God's call is wise and good.
It is sensitizing ourselves to this call**

**so that we can be led and guided by it.
It is the renewed willingness to give up
the security we experience in ideas and customs
and to enter into the adventure of the trusting life.**

*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

**One reason we are Christians
is that we would like to follow Christ
more than we do...**

**Deep down we know that our lives
are too cluttered with things
and that we fall short
of the simpler living
to which Christ calls us.**

**Our lives have not caught up
with our better intentions.**

**At best, we are but Christians
in the making.**

Benediction

Postlude

Alexandre Guilmant

“Fuga 'alla Handel”

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **KT Tilford**.

The prelude is played by **Karen Kline**, piano.

The Call to Worship is adapted from *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings About Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness* by Wendell Berry.

The Opening Prayer is from *Bread for the Journey* edited by Ruth C. Duck.

“Hush!” is sung by The Covenant Singers, directed by Fran Avera, from May 6, 2018.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The Prayer of Dedication was adapted from *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* by John Cobb and David Griffin.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism* by Jay McDaniel.

The postlude is played by Carl McAliley, organ.

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

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

This Sunday, Richard Johnson will share his spiritual journey.

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website: <https://www.covenanthouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

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

Covenant will be holding smaller groups on Zoom. We will also hold virtual coffee time each Sunday at 11am on Facebook.

Calendar

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| Sun. Jan. 24 | 9:00 a.m. | Worship Online |
| | 10:00 a.m. | Adult Education via Zoom |
| | 11:00 a.m. | Zoom coffee time |
| Wed. Jan. 27 | 7:00 p.m. | Covenant Singers, Zoom Meeting |
| Thur. Jan. 28 | 10:00 a.m. | Community Group, Zoom Meeting |
| Thur. Jan. 28 | 8:00 p.m. | Community Group, Zoom Meeting |
| Fri. Jan. 29 | 1:00 p.m. | Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom |

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.