



Seventh & James Baptist Church
December 18, 2022 · 11:00 a.m.
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

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Chiming of the Hour

Meditation

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

(DIVINUM MYSTERIUM)
arr. Wilbur Held

Lighting the Candle of Love

John and Meg Cullar

Love is an often overused word: “I love your dress, I love this cobbler, I love that car.” But when we hold an infant in our arms, when we feel a comforting arm around our shoulder, when someone holds us until our tears stop flowing, when we’re with a loved one as they draw their last breath, when our heart breaks open in grief we know love to be a word that conveys the deepest truth. This morning we light the candle of Love to remind our hearts and declare with our actions that we are loved by God... deeply and truly. And we seek to grow in our love for God and for one another. May the light of God’s love awaken in us a depth of oneness we’ve never known before, that we may be one with each other and one with God through the coming Christ-child.

Welcome and Call to Worship

Scott Turner

One: Beloved child of God, you are welcome here....

Many: We give thanks to God for bringing us into this moment of worship.

One: For no matter who you are or where you’ve been, you matter to God and to us.

Many: Our hearts rejoice and give thanks for all those who have come before us and made a place for us to worship, pray, sing, wonder, doubt, believe, and just be.

One: May the love of God through Christ our Lord convince you of your worth and invitation into this body of believers as we worship together in thanksgiving and hope.

Choral Summons

“Once In Royal David’s City”

harmonized by
David Schwoebel

Processional Hymn, No. 127

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Litany of Anticipation

Carolyn Casey

One: Into this sanctuary of worship, we come as we are: weary from the race; charged with vibrant hope; and listening for the familiar sounds of the season to soothe our souls.

Many: Grace us with your presence, anticipated One.

One: Like Joseph, we know just enough to follow your light and walk in faith into this moment of revelation.

Many: Light your love in our lives as we join them together in your name.

One: Burst into the scene of our discontent and fill us with the hope, peace, joy, and love that is to come.

Many: We are ready to join our voices with the songs of angels who herald your presence in this world. Fill us with your melody of grace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Carolyn Casey

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

Sally Askins

Epistle Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Carl Hoover

Hymn, No. 147

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

Matt Rosencrans

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Prayers of God’s People

Matt Rosencrans

Offertory

“O Holy Night”

Adolphe Adam
arr. Herbert Colvin

Ellen Deaver, *piano*
Lydia Bratcher, *organ*

Offering plates are available at the doors of the sanctuary as you leave worship.

Doxology

(Sung to Veni Emmanuel, tune of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Children's Sermon

Leslie Rosencrans

*All children are invited to come forward for the Children's Sermon.
Preschoolers [ages 4-kindergarten] may then go to Extended Session.*

Responsive Reading of Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Scott Turner

One: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim,

Many: shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

One: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Many: O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

One: You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

Many: You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

One: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Many: But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself.

One: Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

All: Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Anthem

“In The Bleak Midwinter”

arr. Timothy R. McKinney

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom Cherubim worship night and day,
A breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for him whom Angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and Seraphim thronged the air,
But only his mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him; give him my heart.

Sermon

“God Is With Us!”

Erin Conaway

(Matthew 1:18-25)

Silent Reflection

We tend to fear incarnation precisely because it makes religion so real, so particular, so worldly. We prefer to keep religion on the level of word, yet the Jesus-pattern is word-becoming-flesh. The great lie is that redemption can happen apart from incarnation. Annie Dillard called it ‘the scandal of particularity.’ For the Christian, power is always hidden in powerlessness, just as God was hidden in a poor baby.

We may want the spiritual without the fleshly; we may want the cosmic without the concrete. But if the Word is ever to be loved and shared, we must risk embodiment, which is always concrete and ordinary. There God is both perfectly hidden and perfectly revealed.

— Richard Rohr

Hymn of Commitment, No. 132

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

*If you would like to make a public profession of your faith in Christ
or request membership in this congregation, our ministers
will greet you at the front of the sanctuary.*

Congregational Response

In response to your decision, we pledge ourselves to be the family of God for you in this place; we offer you our love, our care, our kinship, and our hopes; we hope to learn from you, give to you, and receive from you, by God’s grace. Amen.

Pastoral Blessing

Erin Conaway

Choral Response

“Of The Father’s Love Begotten”

(DIVINUM MYSTERIUM)

Postlude

“The First Nowell”

Anna Laura Page

Today at Seventh

Our Pianist today is Ellen Deaver.

The Rose on the Organ celebrates the birth of Miles Oluwafemi Adesina, born December 14. Parents are Alex and Rotimi Adesina. Grandparents are Pat Wilson and Mike Jones.

The Sanctuary Flowers celebrate Bobbie & Bill DeLoach’s 65th wedding anniversary on December 21.

The Foyer Flowers are given by Dan McNeil in honor of Sharon McNeil’s birthday.

The Artwork on the Cover is by Sally Lynn Askins.

Hearing devices are available at the sound booth for any who need assistance.

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