

The background is a deep purple with abstract, wavy, layered shapes in lighter shades of purple. A large, solid black cross is positioned on the right side. Several palm fronds are scattered across the design, some overlapping the cross and the wavy shapes.

Seventh & James Baptist Church
March 5, 2023 · 11:00 a.m.
The Second Sunday in Lent
Living Questions

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Living Questions: How Can These Things Be?

Chiming of the Hour

Meditation

“The Glory of these Forty Days”

(DEO GRACIAS)
Charles Callahan

Welcome and Call to Worship

Erin Conaway

One: What is it like to begin again?

Many: It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.

One: It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.

Many: It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.

One: It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.

Many: May we find God in our seeking.

One: May we learn as we go.

Many: May we be brave enough to begin again.

One: Let us worship the God of new beginnings.

— Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed
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Choral Summons

“Psalm 121”

Processional Hymn, No. 281

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Litany of Answering and Refusing

Bill Cooper

One: We confess you to be the God who calls, who wills, who summons, who has concrete intentions for your creation, and addresses human agents who do your will.

Many: We imagine ourselves to be called by you...

One: Yet a strange lot: called but cowardly,

Many: Obedient but self-indulgent,

One: Devoted to you, but otherwise preoccupied.

Many: In our strange mix of answering and refusing, we give thanks for your call.

One: We pray this day for ourselves, fresh vision.

Many: For our friends, great courage.

One: For sisters and brothers in places more dangerous than ours, deep freedom.

Many: As we seek to answer your call, may we be haunted by your large purposes and spurred onward by your burning presence.

— adapted from Walter Brueggemann,
Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth, p. 31

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Bill Cooper

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 12:1-4a

Sean Sutcliffe

Epistle Reading

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Sally Askins

Hymn, No. 407

“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

Gospel Reading

John 3:1-17

Scott Turner

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Prayers of God’s People

Scott Turner

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.

Offertory

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”

(ABERYSTWYTH)
Paul Manz

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

Doxology

(sung to O WALY, WALY, tune of “When Love Is Found,” No. 524)

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.

Children’s Sermon

Paula Hoover

*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 121

Daniel Farris

One: I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?

Many: My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

One: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

Many: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

One: The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

Many: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

One: The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

**All: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on
and forevermore.**

Anthem

“Just As I Am”

K. Lee Scott

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd’st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, of thy great love; the breadth, length, height, and depth to prove,
Here for a season, then above: O Lamb of God, I come.

Sermon

“How Can These Things Be?”
(John 3:1-17)

Erin Conaway

Hymn of Commitment, No. 619

“Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine”

*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.

Going Out

Daniel Farris

One: We have questions, some are trivial and some rise from the unseen depths of our souls.

Many: We seek your face, O Lord....

One: Not only the answers...but the love, the grace, the mercy, and the mystery in which we trust you will reveal enough for us to move forward together.

Many: As our shared focus grows darker in this room, may the light we carry to the world grow ever brighter.

One: Guide us to love, even when it hurts;

Many: Help us to walk in faith, even when the way is hidden;

One: Be with us as we journey into eternity and your victorious kingdom

All: As we begin and continue, even now. Amen.

Choral Response

“Offertory”

John Ness Beck

And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness
And to walk humbly with your God?

Postlude

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

(BEECHER)
Anna Laura Page

Today at Seventh

Our Pianist today is Ellen Deaver.

The Sanctuary Flowers are given in memory of Bob Jones by Jan and Greg Brown, their children, and Robin Edgerton.

The Art on the Cover was designed by Rachel Farris.

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

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