

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 scene, some appearing as dark silhouettes and others as lighter, semi-transparent shapes.

Seventh & James Baptist Church
March 19, 2023 · 11:00 a.m.
The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Living Questions

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The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Living Questions: Who Sinned?

Chiming of the Hour

Meditation

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

(ROCKINGHAM OLD)

Robert A. Hobby

Welcome and Call to Worship

Erin Conaway

One: Scripture is full of questions...

Many: Where are you?

One: Am I my brother's keeper?

Many: Whom shall I send?

One: Who do you say that I am?

Many: Who sinned?

One: How many times shall I forgive?

Many: If God is for us, who can be against us?

One: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

All: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.

— Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed
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Choral Summons

“Psalm 23”

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul, and leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,

For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

You have anointed my head with oil, my cup is running over.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore.

Processional Hymn, No. 340

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”

Litany of Incarnation

Matt Rosencrans

One: Emmanuel God, we are here this morning looking for Incarnation. We come to cradle the holy in our arms, to hear the newborn cry of the divine creator, to see you decked out in flesh.

Many: Come, Thou long-expected Jesus and set us free.

One: We’re here for a closer glimpse at mystery...if that can be. And a brush with the presence of angels...if that can be. And a glimpse of the star of all stars...if that can be.

Many: Come, Thou long-expected Jesus and set us free.

One: We have need of such things, God—all that is brilliant and wondrous and unexpectedly bright, all that merges mystery with the manger.

All: Come, Thou long-expected Jesus and set us free.

— adapted from *Prayers & Litanies for the Christian Seasons* by Sharlande Sledge

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Matt Rosencrans

Old Testament Reading

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Katie Cook

Epistle Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

Sean Sutcliffe

Hymn, No. 353

“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”

Gospel Reading

John 9:1-11

Erin Conaway

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Prayers of God’s People

Erin Conaway

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.

The Work of God's People

Nancy Brickhouse

Offertory

"I Need Thee Every Hour"

arr. Herbert Colvin/Kurt Kaiser

Donnie Balmos, *piano*

Lydia Bratcher, *organ*

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

Doxology

(sung to O WALLY, WALLY, 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

Leslie Rosencrans

All children are invited to come forward for the Children's Sermon.

Preschoolers [ages 4-kindergarten] may then go to Extended Session.

Anthem

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Robert H. Young

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Sermon

"Who Sinned?"

Meredith Stone

(John 9:1-11)

Silent Reflection

For what we need to know, of course, is not just that God exists...but that there is a God right here in the thick of our day-by-day lives who may not be writing messages

about Himself in the stars but who in one way or another is trying to get messages through our blindness as we move around down here knee-deep in the fragrant muck and misery and marvel of the world. It is not objective proof of God's existence we want but, whether we use religious language for it or not, it's the experience of God's presence.

— Frederick Buechner

Hymn of Commitment, No. 587

“Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound”

*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

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

arr. Mack Wilberg

The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine for ever.

Postlude

“Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

(JESU, MEINE FREUDE)
Michael Burkhardt