



Seventh & James Baptist Church
December 10, 2023 · 11:00 a.m.
The Second Sunday of Advent

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Chiming of the Hour

Meditation

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

arr. Anna Laura Page

Adult Handbell Choir

Welcome and Call to Worship

Leslie Rosencrans

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

“O Magnum Mysterium”

Evan Ramos

O magnum mysterium (o great mystery)

Et admirabile sacramentum (and wonderful sacrament)

Ut animalia viderunt Dominum natum (that animals should see the newborn Lord)

Jacentem in praesepe (lying in a manger)

O magnum mysterium (o great mystery) Amen.

Processional Hymn, No. 87

“Arise, Your Light Is Come”

Litany of Peace

Scott Turner

One: Peace...the illusive white rabbit we too often chase trying to be more efficient, more determined, more dedicated to our to-do lists, but it only runs faster, screaming behind its fluffy tail, “You’re late! You’re late for a very important date!”

Many: Lord, treat us like the sheep of the Psalmist and make us lie down by the still waters and lead us to the green grass of your Peace.

One: But our frantic chaos is a luxury compared to the madness so many experience in our world. Too many are listening to the cries of their hungry children, too many are sleeping in refugee tents and under bridges, too many are hiding behind couches from abusive partners, too many are looking for safe places to hide in case the shooting starts, too many are afraid to drive at night or walk in their neighborhood because of the hue of their skin, too many are filled with hatred for people they don't know and want to fight for reasons they don't understand.

Many: Prince of Peace, come into our world and put an end to our warring insanity, our selfish hoarding, our fearful wall-building, our violent “solutions,” our still deadly racism, our mindless inheriting of hate.

One: We need peace. We need it in moments that take our breath away as well as a deep foundation for our hearts and minds. We need to breathe deeply the peace of your grace and presence and embrace the work laid out before us as you call us to make peace for all of our neighbors.

All: Calm our whirring minds and help us to walk deliberately in your Peace.

Prayer of Peace

Scott Turner

Lighting the Candle of Peace

Jo-Ann Tsang

These wounds run deep...they are historical and insurmountable. Let this world, wrought with war, begin to see hatred dissolve between enemies as we pray for them—whomever they are, and seek to love them. We light the candle of Peace this morning to calm our anxieties as they pop into our mind and to light the way to a different world. A world where violence is no longer glorified. Where power is admired in gentleness. Where neighbors in Gaza and Israel defy old stories and break bread together. Where Syrian children think about reading and math and not air-raid drills and chemical weapons. Where first graders in America trade clear backpacks for bags adorned with cartoons and superheroes. We light the candle of Peace as an act of determination—to make peace on Earth as it is in Heaven.

— *Sacred Seasons Advent/Christmastide 2023*,
a publication from Seeds of Hope Publishers

Choral Response

“When God Is a Child”

Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright.

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth.

When God is a child there’s joy in our song.

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:1-11

Viola Osborn

Epistle Reading

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Annette Lindsey

Hymn, No. 95

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:1-8

Daniel Farris

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Prayers of God’s People

Daniel Farris

Offertory

“O Come, Little Children”

Cynthia Dobrinski

Adult Handbell Choir

During the offertory, we invite you to prayerfully consider your stewardship of all the resources God is entrusting to you. The work of God at Seventh & James is dependent on the financial generosity and volunteer service of its members and friends. Offering plates are available at the doors of the sanctuary as you leave worship. Join us as you respond to God’s call.

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 85:1-2, 8-13

Erin Conaway

One: Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

Many: You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin.

One: Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Many: Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

One: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Many: Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.

One: The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

All: Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

Anthem

"Hymn of Angels"

Thomas Grassi

Gloria! Glory to God in the highest, in the highest heaven!
And on earth, let there be peace.

Sermon

"Patient Peace"

Erin Conaway

(2 Peter 3:8-15a)

Silent Reflection

Our sense of urgency is balanced by the requirement to wait — to wait on the timing of God, which we can neither predict nor force. And the poor of the world have much to teach us about waiting — waiting with hope, purpose, and active preparation for change; waiting without falling into despair. For activists it may be hard but necessary

to thank God for ‘the darkness of waiting,’ and for what we learn ‘through failing where we hoped to succeed.’

— Janet Morley, *Bread of Tomorrow: Praying with the World’s Poor*,
quoted in *Sacred Seasons, Seeds of Hope Hunger Emphasis 2008*

Hymn of Commitment, No. 99

“View the Present Through the Promise”

*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 Benediction

“There Is No Rose”

Robert H. Young

Leave we all this worldly mirth and follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus. (Let us follow)

Postlude

“From Heaven Above ”

(VOM HIMMEL HOCH)
Wilbur Held

Today at Seventh

Adult Handbell Choir

Rosalie Beck
Sonia Belew
Paula Hoover
Linda Hynan

Pat Hynan
Missy Kittner
Ann McGlashan
Bryce Shelton

Ann Sims
Carolien Tantra
Patricia Wilson

Our Pianist today is Tommy Edds.

The Artwork on the Cover is by Sally Lynn Askins.

The Sanctuary Flowers are dedicated to Cyndi McKinney on behalf of the choir in appreciation for her dedicated service as our choir librarian.

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

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