



**Seventh & James Baptist Church  
February 2, 2025 · 11:00 a.m.  
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany**

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**Chiming of the Hour**

**Meditation**                      “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”                      (ST. MARGARET)  
arr. Herbert Colvin

**Welcome and Call to Worship**                      Erin Conaway

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 Love of God Most Full”                      John Purifoy  
O love of God most full, O love of God most free,  
Come warm my heart, come fill my soul, come lead me unto thee. Amen .

**Processional Hymn, No. 281**                      “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

**Litany of Faith, Hope, and Love**                      Leslie Rosencrans

One: Lord, we gather this morning in your presence, mindful of the commonality of your children, so we pray for our neighbors and for ourselves: for the seasons when our minds are draped with doubts and the temptation of apathetic withdrawal washes over our thoughts like waves on the beach...

**Many: Lord, give us faith.**

One: For the seasons when our hearts are sinking deep into despair, when the inky cloak of grief and pain shrouds our vision and we cannot see any light, when the way feels broken, jagged, ensnaring and nothing else...

**Many: Lord, give us hope.**

One: For the seasons when our souls turn cold, when bitterness peppers our every thought, when anger and rage are the only comfort we know, when we want to sit in the judgment seat and declare condemnation and ruin on our enemies, when we've been hurt beyond recognition...

**All: Lord, give us love. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but a day is coming when we will see face to face. In your grace and mercy, draw us into that day.**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Leslie Rosencrans

**Old Testament Reading**

*Jeremiah 1:4-10*

Becky Griffin

**Epistle Reading**

*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

Robert Ward

**Hymn, No. 264**

“Where Charity and Love Prevail”

**Gospel Reading**

*Luke 4:21-30*

Matt Rosencrans

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

**Many: Thanks be to God.**

**Prayers of God's People**

Matt Rosencrans

**Offertory**

“Meditation on *Ubi Caritas*”

Charles Callahan

“Where charity and love are, God is there.”

*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, No. 707

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.*

## Responsive Reading of Psalm 71:1-6

Scott Turner

One: In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

**Many: In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.**

One: Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

**Many: Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.**

One: For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

**All: Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.**

## Anthem

“The Greatest Gift Is Love”

Mark Hayes

Though I speak with tongues of angels, though my voice is touched with gold,  
Without love -- each word is discord, clanging brass and cymbals bold.  
Though I know as much as prophets, though my faith is strong and sure,  
Without love -- these are as nothing, neither words nor work endure.

Though I give my goods to others, and my flesh I give to burn,  
Without love -- each gift is worthless, till the gift of love I learn.  
Love is always kind and patient, neither jealous, boastful, rude;  
Neither selfish nor conceited, but with every grace endowed.

Love releases all resentment, takes no pleasure in the wrong,  
Love finds truth delightful always, and endures what comes along.

Though not easily offended, love is eager to forgive,  
Always trusting, always hoping, precious love will always live.

In a world that is imperfect, many gifts will pass away;  
Faith and hope and love are endless, these and these alone will stay.  
To a world where all is changing, comes this promise from above,  
Faith and hope will last forever, but the greatest gift is love.

**Sermon**

“A More Excellent Way...”  
*(1 Corinthians 13:1-13)*

Erin Conaway

### **Silent Reflection**

Somewhere each day we have to fall in love, with someone, something, some moment, event, phrase. Somehow each day we must allow the softening of the heart. Otherwise our hearts will move inevitably toward hardness. We will move toward cynicism, bitterness, fear and despair. That’s where most of the world is trapped and doesn’t even know it.... Ask the Lord to give you the grace to fall in love. Then you’ll see rightly, because only when we are in love do we understand. Only when we’ve given ourselves to reality can we in fact receive reality. That is the endless mystery of the Trinity that is expressed in every facet of this world: Perfect giving equals perfect receiving.

— Richard Rohr, *The Passion of God and the Passion Within*

**Hymn of Commitment, No. 440**

“Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire”

*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**

“The Greatest of These”

Jane Marshall

Love is kind, and suffers long; love is meek, and thinks no wrong;  
Love than death itself more strong; therefore give us love.  
Faith and hope, love we see, joining hand in hand, agree;  
But the greatest of the three, and the best, is love.

**Postlude**

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Anna Laura Page

**Today at Seventh**

**Our Pianist today** is Donnie Balmos.

**The Sanctuary Flowers** are given in celebration of the 60th wedding anniversary of Betty & Ed Oxford.

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

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