



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

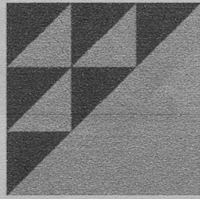
DECEMBER 22, 2024

11 AM WORSHIP



1111 Harvard Avenue | Seattle, WA 98122 | seattlefirstbaptist.org

We invite you to look at the banners hanging above the sanctuary and note that they display quilt square designs from our theme this Advent season, "Words for the Beginning". Each quilt square is a visual representation of the theme for one given Sunday of Advent. This morning's theme is:



HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK This traditional quilt square design is called "birds in the air." Sometimes when we take a risk, hope takes flight. At times it may feel like you're falling, but you'll find that, in God's embrace, you are flying.

We gather on the unceded ancestral lands of the Coast Salish people, past and present. With gratitude, we honor the land itself and the legacy of the First People of Seattle, the Duwamish Tribe. May we remember that the oppression of Native peoples is not a relic of the past but continues today. And may we, through God's Spirit, repent and walk forward together, changing systems that discriminate as we live into authentic diversity and healing.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

**If it is comfortable, you are invited to stand.*

Announcements

Pastor Anita Peebles

Prelude

Christian Broughton

Antiphon III: "O Ye Daughters of Jerusalem," Op. 18, No. 3

MARCEL DUPRÉ

Call to Worship

Pastor Leigh Curl-Dove

One: In this weary world,

ALL: we sing of joy.

One: In this fragile world,

ALL: we lift each other up.

One: In this beautiful world,

ALL: we look for God.

One: In this tender world,

ALL: we hold onto hope.

One: This is the invitation of faith. So in this time of worship, may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

ALL: With hope in our hearts, amen!

***Hymn 122**

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”

STUTTGART

Time with Children

Pastor Anita Peebles

Advent Candle Lighting

David Delgado
& Susan Blythe-Goodman

***Candle Lighting Song 107 (v. 4)**

REJOICE, REJOICE

“Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn”

Marty Haugen

Re-joyce, re-joyce, take heart in the night, though cold the win-ter is cheer-less, the
ris - ing sun shall crown you with light, be strong and lov-ing and fear - less;
Love be our song and love our prayer, and love our end - less sto - ry, may
God fill ev - ery day we share, and bring us at last into glo - ry.

Scripture

MATTHEW 1:18-25 (NRSVUE)

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the

Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Reader: For the word of God in scripture,
for the word of God among us, and for the word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God.

Call to Giving

Lynn Gaertner-Johnson

***Hymn 128**

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

CRANHAM

Prayer

Pastor Anita Peebles

Anthem

“Wexford Carol”

Sanctuary Choir

arr. ELAINE HAGENBERG

Good people all, this Christmas time, consider well and bear in mind,
What our good God for us has done, in sending the beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray to God with love this Christmas day,
In Bethlehem upon that morn, there was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep their flocks and lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God’s angels did appear which put the shepherds in great fear.
“Prepare and go,” the angels said, “To Bethlehem, be not afraid.
For there you’ll find this happy morn, a princely babe sweet Jesus born.”

With thankful heart and joyful mind, the shepherds went the babe to find
And as God’s angels had foretold, they did our Savior Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid, and by his side, the Virgin maid
Attending on the Lord of life, who came to earth to end all strife.

Scripture

LUKE 1:46-55 (NRSVUE)

Pastor Leigh Curl-Dove

And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Reader: For the word of God in scripture,
for the word of God among us, and for the word of God within us,
All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon “A Song of Hope and Promise” Pastor Leigh Curl-Dove

***Hymn 154** AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUAL
“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Benediction Pastor Leigh Curl-Dove

Postlude Christian Broughton
Magnificat VI: “Gloria,” Op. 18, No. 15
MARCEL DUPRÉ

You may give financially to SFBC online here:



Children are a treasured part of our community. Please find a Worship Adventure Packet or a Busy Box at the tables in the foyer. Children are free to use these resources in the pews or in the Wiggle Room, a mostly soundproof room on the north end of the sanctuary where young worshippers and people who need to move around can see and hear the service.

Every minor in the Wiggle Room must be attended by an adult.

STARS FOR EPIPHANY

Join Darren in the Parlor following worship this morning to help us finish decorating the large paper stars that will hang in our sanctuary during the season of Epiphany.

ADVOCACY 101 WORKSHOP

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5 FROM 1-2PM IN THE PARLOR

An important aspect of justice work is advocacy—calling our elected officials, letter-writing, offering public comment at city council meetings, and more. If you’ve never done it before (or even if you have), it can feel overwhelming. With that in mind, we hope you will join us after worship on Sunday, January 5th for an Advocacy 101 workshop with Elizabeth Dickinson from Faith Action Network! Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Pastor Leigh (including any dietary restrictions) if you would like to attend.

SFBC DONATION TO THE AMOS TRUST CHRISTMAS APPEAL

At the December 3rd monthly meeting, the Council of Ministries decided to make a \$2500 contribution to the Amos Trust Christmas Appeal. Money collected during the Christmas Appeal will provide the following for people in Gaza:

- Essential medical care with Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital.
- Vital food and water aid, in coordination with MA’AN Development, the Welfare Association, and Gaza Sunbirds, who are purchasing food and water locally while aid trucks are being denied access to central Gaza.
- Therapeutic interventions for women and children, aspiring to provide support for approximately 8,500 women and 35,000 children in 2025.
- Support for Gazan writers, artists and musicians who still convey beauty in the face of horror and who are documenting their experiences in Gaza.

Any donation to the Amos Trust given from December 3-10 will be doubled through a matching grant to their organization. It is our hope

that our \$2500 donation (doubled to total \$5000) will make a positive difference for our brothers, sisters and siblings living in Gaza.

Amos Trust is a small creative human rights organization committed to challenging injustice, building hope and creating positive change. They are “rooted in the inclusive stream of Christianity that stresses justice and liberation for the oppressed.” They “work to create this through non-violence, reconciliation and peace...Amos’ name was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King’s use of the Hebrew prophet Amos’ call to “Let justice flow like rivers.” Many thanks to Susan Blythe-Goodman for sharing the Amos Trust Christmas Appeal with the Council of Ministries.

ADVENT PLAYLIST

Our Advent theme this year is “Words for the Beginning.” Advent is the beginning of the church calendar for the year. It is the season where we wait in anticipation for the birth of Jesus. There are many beginnings in our lives—new relationships, new babies, new jobs, new homes, new cities, new schools—the list is endless. Sometimes a beginning is exciting, and other times a beginning is scary. Other times something ends, and you have to pick up the pieces and begin again. We hope this playlist will be a welcome soundtrack in this season of beginning.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4nT3IM0rSQjhwLvvgtuK6j?si=4f96e0784c1449a9>

SFBC CALENDAR THIS WEEK

All groups and events are open to new members unless otherwise stated below. For more information, see the church calendar, The Spire, or email smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org. The schedule below is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

SUNDAY 12/22 ADVENT GODLY PLAY 9:30am in the Parlor

SUNDAY 12/22 WORSHIP 11am in the Sanctuary

SUNDAY 12/22 YOUTH GROUP 1-2:30pm

SUNDAY 12/22 INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION 6:30-8pm on Zoom

TUESDAY 12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 5pm

TUESDAY 12/24 (from noon) - WEDNESDAY 1/1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS BREAK

SUNDAY 12/29 LESSONS AND CAROLS 11 am in the Sanctuary

Email contact@seattlefirstbaptist.org to reach any of the following people.

STAFF

Rev. Anita Peebles, *Pastor*

Rev. Leigh Curl-Dove, *Pastor*

Darren Hochstedler, *Church Administrator*

Christina Sunstone, *Office Manager & Small Group
Ministries Coordinator*

Ben Luedcke, *Minister of Music*

Christian Broughton, *Organist & Communications
Manager*

Dick Steele, *Facilities Manager*

Chase McAdams, *Caretaker*

Stephenie Simmons, *Chef*

COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

Mike Zaugg, *President*

Sue Ross, *Vice President*

Inola de la Cruz, *Treasurer*

Roem de la Cruz

Heather Dodge

Julio Gutierrez

Janet Hasselblad

Mary Keith

Bob Sittig

David Young



FAVORED ONE

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Luke 1:26-38

Digital painting

"She was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be." (Luke 1:29) I'm certain I would have had the same reaction to being called "favored one" by God's messenger. At an early age, I learned that because I am human, I am sinful, and by my very existence, I am unsuitable to be in God's presence. Without Jesus to intercede on my behalf, my unworthiness was untenable to God. Needless to say, this was

not good for my self-esteem or self-image, and though I have done a lot of work to untangle these lessons from my expanding theology, there is a lot of lingering self-doubt—bordering on self-hatred—that I have yet to root out.

God chooses Mary, a young, unmarried woman—with little value as far as society is concerned—to be the conduit through which Love takes on flesh. "Why me?" I can almost hear Mary's spiraling thoughts even before she knows the purpose of the angel's visit. And then the angel pronounces what is to come. I imagine Mary first confused, then nearly crushed by the weight of an impossible burden. How do I square this reading with the fact that Mary is favored by God?

I originally created this image for *Sojourners Magazine*. I was invited to create an illustration based on Natalie Wigg Stevenson's reflection on the Annunciation through a queer theological lens.¹ Stevenson's writing stretched me beyond my limits, and once I got past my discomfort, I became grateful for this challenge. Her commentary broke open my perspective and rebuilt it with affirmation, agency, consent, and pleasure. She notes that Mary is affirmed by the angel: "Greetings, favored one!" (v. 28), Mary exhibits agency: "How can this be?" (v. 34), and offers consent: "Here I am . . . let it be with me according to your word" (v. 38). Stevenson's writing introduced a question I had never considered: *What if Mary experienced pleasure?* This notion proved incompatible with my internalized shame. It challenged my deep-seated feelings of unworthiness and threatened to overturn the construct of a God who is repelled by anything human—especially the very natural human qualities of pleasure and desire. The exercise of sitting with this thought felt revolutionary.

As I attempted to create imagery to accompany her work, I found myself in tears. What if my fully embodied self, including the most human parts of me, are not only acceptable but beloved by the creator of the universe? What if because of my me-ness, God couldn't stay away, and chose to come near and take on flesh too? As I drew, I felt a few steps closer to accepting the steadfast, limitless, unconditional love of God that I claim to believe in, but have yet to fully receive.

What resulted was an image of Mary and Gabriel in a warm, intimate embrace. Mary has a peace to her that is like a wave of relief over her whole being. A kaleidoscope quilt pattern surrounds them and patterns Mary's clothes. If we could open ourselves up to receive the incomprehensible love of God, maybe we would constantly feel wrapped up in a soft, cozy, lovingly-stitched-together quilt. Favored one, God delights in you—every single bit of you. Never forget: you are a blessing. —Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org | © 2024

Cover art: "The Good That Is Yours" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn | melody: REJOICE, REJOICE | Words and music by Marty Haugen | © 1982 GIA Publications. Reprinted by permission under OneLicense #A-712381.