



Joy

WORSHIP OF GOD | DECEMBER 15, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | CANTATA SUNDAY

First Rochester | An American Baptist Church

175 Allens Creek Road | Rochester, New York 14618 | rochesterfbc.org
Rev. Joanne Gilbert-Cannon, senior pastor | Eliecia Young, pastoral assistant
Henry Griffin, music director | Samuel Baker, organist | Mary Pan, guest organist

Scriptures

Luke 3:7-18

Rev. Joanne Gilbert-Cannon

Morning Prayer

Eliecia Young

Sharing our joys and concerns

Unison Lord's Prayer

Children's Time

Pastor Joanne

*Hymn 172

For Ages Women Hoped and Prayed

Jane P. Huber;
English Melody

Advent Cantata

for the fearful heart, Op. 9

Henry Griffin

I. Isaiah 35:1-10 The desert and the parched land will be glad

II. Psalm 146:5-10 Blessed are those whose help is in the God of Jacob

III. James 5:7-10 Be patient, then brothers and sisters

IV. Matthew 11:2-10 When John, who was in prison,

See full texts and program notes below

*Closing Hymn 176 *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates*

George Weissel,

Williams' *Psalmodia Evangelica*

Benediction



*This year's cantata is made possible through the generous donations from
the Susan Boulay Memorial Music Fund.*

for the fearful heart, Op. 9

an advent cantata composed by Henry Griffin
commissioned by First Baptist Church of Rochester

One of the shared goals of the music committee and staff of First Rochester was to present an English-language Cantata for our 2024 season. I brought up the idea of a commissioned piece back in February on a zoom call with Rev. Joanne when I was away for a month singing lots of contemporary vocal music with Opera on the James in Virginia. This inspired me into a composition spree which eventually morphed into my composition of this Cantata. My goal with this piece of music is to bring these highly descriptive, evocative Biblical texts to life. Most importantly, they are highly anticipatory in nature, in accordance with Advent III. Here are the texts themselves with some brief annotations to give insights into their composition relative to their Biblical meaning.

I. Isaiah 35: 1-10

(Chorus, Vocal Soloists, Piano, and Organ)

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the Lord,
the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
will come to save you.”

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,

¹⁰ and those the Lord has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Program Note for this movement:

The Cantata opens with a soprano chanting “gladness” of the “parched land” with the “splendor of God.” This text evoked a certain archaic feeling upon my study of this particular scripture and I therefore set this opening solo as both chant-like (free of rhythm and meter yet fairly predictable in contour) and modal (opening in D Dorian mode and eventually referencing A Phrygian mode). This A Phrygian sets up a half-cadence that yields to the main motif for the piece, first declaimed by the organ in a full, brassy registration. This theme establishes the main motivic material for the entire work — listen for it in movement four. Near the end of movement one, the piano and the organ clash in dueling bitonality with extremely dissonant interjections, purposefully guiding the contour toward A flat Major — a full tritone away from where we started.

II. Psalm 146: 5-10

(A Cappella Chorus)

⁵Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord, their God.

⁶He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.

⁷He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free,

⁸the Lord gives sight to the blind,
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹The Lord watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰The Lord reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end, Amen.

Program Note for this movement:

Continuing in A flat Major, this movement is a more idiomatically traditional choral setting of a Psalm in the style of harmonized Anglican chant. Anglican, like some Gregorian chants, is based on a main reciting tone; however, its principal difference is that it employs four-part harmonies in the choir. I also couldn't resist deviating from the norm a bit and adding a B section that has a sense of falling, Italianate harmony before defaulting back to the dominant and reprising the original reciting tone.

III. James 5:7-10

(Emma Unkrich, mezzo-soprano; Henry Griffin, piano)

⁷Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Program Note for this movement:

Compositionally, this movement is probably the most far-afiel from the rest of the Cantata as I dreamed up this romantic melody at a shabby electric piano this summer in Arkansas. I wanted to write a solo vocal piece in the style of Poulenc's mélodie (his music can be characterized best by unexpected, quickly- and chromatically-shifting harmonies reminiscent of jazz). Emma's virtuosic performance this past spring in Poulenc's opera Dialogues des Carmélites showcased her vocal ability and affinity for singing in a French style so I composed this movement specifically for her as a thank-you for her three years of musical service singing here as mezzo and now our most senior section leader of First Baptist Church Choir.

Matthew 11: 2-10

(Chorus, Vocal Soloists, Organ, and Piano)

²When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

⁷As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you." Amen.

Program Note for this movement:

After a drawn-out introduction rising out of the previous movement, this movement returns to the more complex texture and instrumentation of the first movement: a choral texture with dialogue between piano and organ with moments of dissonance and tension resolving to those of consonance and purity. Listen for moments of text-painting such as with the text “The reed swayed by the wind.” The choir builds to the climax of the piece when Jesus is described as being “more than a prophet.” The following text about a messenger heralds a triumphant return of the main motif, but this time in F Major instead of D minor, as well as a reference to the “Christmas chord” from the final verse of “Adeste fidelis.” The final plagal “Amen” from the choir yields to a blustery recap of the outro from the third movement in the piano and one final, brief reference to the Psalm to serve as a bookend to the Cantata’s main musical motifs.

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My intent is to inspire all of us, congregation and performers alike, as we go into this holiday season — that we can keep a piece of this childlike joy in our hearts throughout the year. Remember, the stars shine the brightest in the darkest night!

Sincerely,

Henry Griffin

Music Director, First Baptist Church of Rochester



Thank you to others who contributed their gifts today: including ushers: Dick Wien and Gene Tiesler; fellowship: Judy Oaks and Kandee Tabor; our tech team: Wes Selleck, Oliver Hood, Scott and Susen McClellan, Glenn Stahl, and Janet Richardson; Nursery, Melina Mineti and Bethany Aitkenhead; Teachers, Nan Wilson and Judy Oaks.

Special thank you to our musicians: Naomi Chad, soprano; Xiaoge Zhang, soprano; Emma Unkrich, mezzo; Joshua Gleason, tenor; Kellen Mikesell, tenor; Ashton Rapp, baritone; Saffion Chung, bass; First Rochester Choir; Doleen Hood, piano; Mary Pan, organ; Xintong Li, assistant director; Henry Griffin, director

2024 Advent Dedication Poinsettias

<i>Given By</i>	<i>In Memory / Honor of</i>
For Samuel Baker	Given in memory of James Weaver and speedy healing for Sam
Carol Dinse Jamison	Given in memory of Barbara, Susan, and Robert Dinse
Ken Dodgson	Given in memory of Sally Lewis Dodgson and Jean Bartlett
The Dodgson Family	Given in honor of First Rochester Family
Wendi, daughter and our Frederick Family	Given in honor of Rev. Barbara J. Wolin
Ivan Marable	Given in memory of my mother, Ludie Will Hatten and my sister Beryl Huffman
Kenneth and Marcia McCarthy	Given in memory of parents: Francis and Amy McCarthy, Charles and Edna Oaks, and sisters: Nancy Oaks & Beverly McCarthy Campbell
Carol Misra	Given in memory of John and Esther Brangwynne and in honor of Rev. Tali Jamir & Family, pastor FBC Belmont, MN
Kandee Tabor	Given in memory of Ken & Purette Tabor and Donna Gibalski
The Pensgen Family	Given in memory of Wally and Marjorie Pensgen
Tom and Betty Richards	Given in memory of Tom and Mary Richards
Janet and Doug Richardson	Given in memory of Charles H. Porter and Evelyn Marie Richardson
JoAnn Trolley	Given in memory of the August Shouse's and the Robert William's
Peg and Ken Williams Family	Given in memory of Brenda Williams and other loved ones.
Nana and Granddad	Given in honor of Mia, Wes, Drew, Aria, and Zander

INVITATION TO MISSION AND MINISTRY

We welcome you to First Rochester, regardless of race, class, gender, physical challenge, place of origin, or sexual orientation. **If you're new with us**, please fill out the **connection card** found in your pew and drop it with the offering. We look forward to getting to know you better!

Today, Sunday, December 15, everyone will be treated to the debut of this year's **Cantata**, featuring the First Rochester Choir with special musical guests from Eastman School of Music and written especially for us by Henry Griffin.

Cookie Fellowship, sponsored by the worship committee, will be held in the Garden Room and Parlor during Fellowship with some decorating options.

Dedication Poinsettias: Thank you to those who ordered dedication Poinsettias and help us decorate the church sanctuary. Please see the inserted dedications. You may take home your poinsettia following worship on December 24 or 29.

Mid-week Meditation Service on Wednesdays is on hiatus. We will revisit this Service at special times throughout the year.

OWLS will meet on Thursday, December 19 for their Holiday Party! (and their final Event for the year) Chair exercise 11:30 AM. Lunch and program at 12:15 PM. Donations welcomed. Please RSVP kandeetabor@gmail.com.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Please invite your friends and family to join us at 5 PM on Christmas Eve for our candlelight service.

Limited Office Hours: From Christmas Eve until January 2, the church staff will have limited office hours. Someone will check messages periodically.

Jammies and Jingles Service on December 29 will be filled with carols, scripture, stories, and you in your jammies (or other casual clothes!) See you then.

Are you an officer, chairperson, or do you convene a group at First Rochester? If yes, please submit a short report (one page or less) about your activities during 2024 for the Annual Report (electronically please) no later than Sunday, January 5, 2025.

Book Study Wednesday evenings in January and February: Join us as we read and discuss Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee, Amanda Tyler's book, *How to End Christian Nationalism*. Our first Wednesday night will be January 22 from 6:30 – 7:30 PM on Zoom.

FBCR Book Club will meet again on January 21 at 11:30 AM and will discuss *I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman* by Nora Ephron.

Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting of the First Baptist Church and Society to be held on **January 26, 2025**, following worship. Details will be coming.

Upcoming Advent and Christmas Events:

December 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24: Christmas Eve Service @ 5 PM

December 24 to January 2: Limited Office Hours

December 29: Jammies and Jingles @ 10 AM