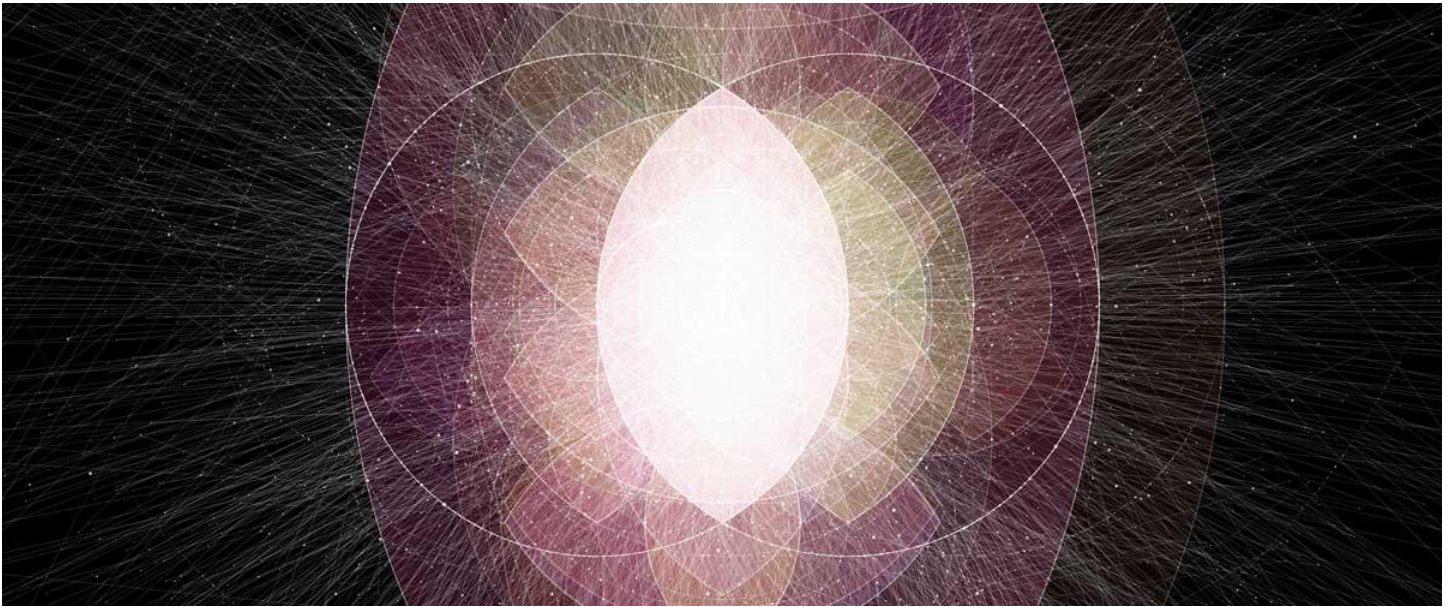




The In-Between Way: Watch

8:45 a.m. + December 1, 2024 + First Sunday of Advent



*People with a silent mind are very rarely found.
This is the attribute only of those
who use all means to attract to themselves Divine Grace
and to be filled with the spiritual comfort flowing from it.
Thus let us practice mental doing, this philosophy of Christ,
in guarding our mind and in watchfulness....
Watchfulness is rightly called a Way, for it leads to the Kingdom –
both the Kingdom within us and that of the Future.
It is also called the workshop of the mind,
for it fashions and polishes our mental character
and transforms our soul from enslaved to free.
Watchfulness is also like a small window
through which God enters and appears to the mind.
St. Philotheus of Sinai,
Forty Texts on Watchfulness*

Crossing the Threshold

Singing our Welcome

*Veni, veni,
Veni, veni, Immanuel;
Veni, veni,
Veni Immanuel.*

“Veni Immanuel” (O Come, Immanuel)

Lighting the Advent Candle

From deep in the past, Jeremiah calls to us, "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 33:14).

Beloved, the days are surely coming when the yearning of the land; the longing of the sun, moon, and stars; the desperate need of the people of earth for flourishing and peace will receive their fulfillment.

While fear, anxiety, misinformation, and suspicion surround us on every side, we choose to watch and wait in hope, preparing our hearts to notice and cooperate with God's grace already at work in our midst.

We light this candle of hope as a sign of our commitment to pay attention and prepare for the days that are surely coming and are already here – the days when God's kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will reign.

Opening to God

***Veni, veni,
Veni, veni, Immanuel;
Veni, veni,
Veni Immanuel.***

"Veni Immanuel" (O Come, Immanuel)

Sitting with Scripture

*To You, O Love, I lift up my soul!
O Heart within my heart, in You I place my trust.
Let me not feel unworthy; let not fear rule over me.
Yes! May all who open their hearts
 savour You and bless the earth!
Compel me to know your ways, O Love;
 instruct me upon your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
 for through You will I know wholeness;
I shall reflect your Light both day and night.
Your paths are loving and sure, O Holy One,
 and those who give witness to You through their lives
 are blessed beyond measure.
I bow down before You;
 instruct me, that I might choose the way of love and truth.
I would live in your abundant Love.
Your friendship is offered to all whose hearts are open;
You make known your promises to them.
My eyes are ever on You, Beloved,
 keep my feet from stumbling along the way.*

Psalm 25 Nan Merrill Selected verses

Singing our Hope

***Don't be afraid,
My love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid,
My love is stronger,
And I have promised,
Promised to be always near.***

"Don't Be Afraid"

Contemplating Scripture

Luke 21:34-36

*"Be attentive to yourselves,
so that your hearts are not weighed down
with dissipation and intoxication and the distractions of this life
and that Day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap.
For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.
Stay awake in every season, praying that you may have the strength
to escape all these things that will take place
and to stand before the Son of Adam."*

Song of Response

"The Breezes at Dawn"

*The breezes at dawn have secrets to tell you, do not go back to sleep.
The heart-door is open and bids you to enter, do not go back to sleep.
The two worlds are waiting, the journey before you, stay awake.*

*Stay awake, stay awake.
Stay awake, stay awake.*

Meditation

Song of Response

"Created World, Creative World"

*Created world. Creative world, between two worlds – a bridge.
Created world. Creative world, between two worlds – a bridge*

*Be sure you understand this, be sure you understand.
Be sure you understand this, between two worlds a bridge.*

*You yourself, within yourself, between two worlds – a bridge.
You yourself, within yourself, between two worlds – a bridge.*

Silence

During these minutes of silence, simply rest in God's abiding and loving presence in this moment. You are in God and God is in you. Just be and relax. Center your attention in your heart and imagine your breath flowing in and out from your heart area. If it helps you to center, use a sacred prayer word such as Jesus, Abba, Spirit, Light, or Love.

Consecration

"Veni Immanuel" (O Come, Immanuel)

*Veni, veni,
Veni, veni, Immanuel;
Veni, veni,
Veni Immanuel.*

Communion

"Ave Maria"

*Ave Maria, gratia plena
Dominus tecum;
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee;
Blessed art thou amongst women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen*



Our Staff

Haley Brown – Associate Director of The Anchor House

Courtney Garrison – Ministry Assistant

Peter Johns – Associate Director of Contemplative Worship

Zachary Montasser – Violinist

Rev. Rachel Sciretti – Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Michael Sciretti, Jr. – Pastor of The Center

Today's Music

"Veni Immanuel" – John L. Bell, *"Don't Be Afraid"* – John L. Bell

"The Breezes at Dawn" – Michael Sciretti Jr., *"Created World, Creative World"* – Michael Sciretti Jr.,

"Ave Maria" – Peter Johns

For information about The Center for Christian Spirituality and upcoming events, visit:

www.TheCenterFCS.org.

Please register your presence in the notebooks in the foyer.

If you have a prayer request or seeking support, please contact Rachel Sciretti, rsciretti@chapelwood.org.

Centering Prayer

Today | The Chapel | after Contemplative Worship

Worship Response

Today | The Anchor House | 10:00 a.m.

Carols & Keyboards

December 5 & 6 | The Sanctuary | 7:00 p.m.

A Chapelwood favorite, the annual Carols and Keyboards concerts return with four grand pianos, organ, and choir. This year's concerts feature new tunes and classic Christmas songs in a grand setting. Join Peter Johns, Cameron Cody, James Kelly, keyboardists from around the city, the Chancel Choir, and soloists as we ring in the Christmas season.

Minaret Foundation: Angels and Messengers

December 12 | Houston Congregation For Reform Judaism | 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Join us as we embark on a journey of discovery, exploring the nuances of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic beliefs. Through thought-provoking discussions and open dialogue, we hope to inspire a new appreciation for the rich tapestry of faiths that enrich our world.



Advent Community Gathering

December 15 | The Anchor House | 10:00 a.m.

Join us for some good food and fellowship with friends from our contemplative community after worship in The Anchor House. Make a favorite Christmas treat and bring to share. Your treat can be sweet or savory, we just ask that it not need to be refrigerated or kept warm. The Anchor House will be open before worship so everyone can drop their treat off on the way to the Contemplative Worship Service if you would like. We hope you'll join us and invite a friend or family member.

Upcoming Advent Opportunities & Special Services

Dec 21 – Gastrochurch Fundraiser: Hogwarts Christmas Feast 7:00 p.m.

Dec 22 – The Service of the Longest Night 6:00 p.m.

Dec. 24 – Contemplative Christmas Eve Worship at 6:00 p.m.