

*The beginning of the prelude is a call to silent,
personal preparation for the worship of God.*

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Noël Claude Balbastre
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming Johannes Brahms
What Child Is This Ralph Vaughan Williams
He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child French carol
arr. Morgan Simmons

Introit

“Alleluia, to Us a Child Is Born” Iain Quinn
*Alleluia, to us a child is born: come, let us adore him. Alleluia.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.*

*Doxology (*sung*)

**Praise God whose dawn transfigures night,
Whose Daystar shines for us on high,
Whose Spirit brings into our sight
the hope which to our world draws nigh. Amen.**

*Call to Worship

One: *Along with the shepherds, the magi, and angels,
we too come to Bethlehem.*

Many: **We are filled with love
because God has taken on our humanity.**

One: *We are filled with hope
because God has offered us life and light.*

Many: **We are filled with faith because God has made holy
all that is meek and lowly and humble.**

All: **Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace and goodwill to all.**

*Carol 134 “Joy to the World”

**Stand as you are able.*

Prayer for the Season of Christmas (*unison*)

God most high, your only Son
embraced the weakness of flesh
to give us power to become your children.
Your eternal Word chose a dwelling among us,
that we might live in your presence.
Grant us a spirit of wisdom and wonder
to know how rich is the glory you made our own
and how great the hope to which we are called
in Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter (*responsively*)

Psalm 148 Old Testament, page 550

Anthem

“A Child Is Born in Bethlehem” Samuel Scheidt
*A child is born in Bethlehem, alleluia, and joy is in Jerusalem, alleluia.
Rejoice, sing high, sing low, alleluia, benedicamus Domino, alleluia. To thee,
O Lord, be glory paid, alleluia; thou Son of Mary, mother maid, alleluia.
To Holy Trinity give praise, alleluia, with Deo gracias always, alleluia.*

First Lesson

Isaiah 61:10—62:3 Old Testament, page 650

Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

*Carol 132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Second Lesson

Luke 2:22–40 New Testament, page 55

Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

*Carol 115 “Away in a Manger”

Sermon

Be Amazed Victoria G. Curtiss

Responding to the Word

*Carol 110 “Love Has Come”

*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*). from the Reformed Church in America

Our only hope is Jesus Christ.
After we refused to live in the image of God,
he was born of the virgin Mary,
sharing our genes and our instincts,
entering our culture,
speaking our language,
fulfilling the will of our God.
Being united to Christ’s humanity
we know ourselves when we rest in him.

Jesus Christ is the hope of God’s world.
In his death,
the justice of God is established,
forgiveness of sin is proclaimed.
On the day of resurrection,
the tomb was empty,
his disciples saw him,
death was defeated, new life had come.
God’s purpose for the world was sealed.

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

Prayer Response

“Alleluia, Amen” Parker S. Barnard

Offering

Offertory Anthem

“Ding-dong! Merrily on High!” French carol
arr. Charles Wood

*Ding-dong! Merrily on high in heaven the bells are ringing.
Ding-dong! Verily the sky is riven with angel singing,
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
E'en so here below let steeple bells be swungen,
and "Io" by priest and people sungen,
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Pray you, dutifully prime your Matin chime;
ye ringers, may you beautifully rime
your even time song, ye singers.
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!*

*Presentation of the Offering and Response

For the life that you have giv-en, for the love in Christ made known,
with these fruits of time and la - bor, with these gifts that are your own:
here we of - fer, Lord, our prai - ses; heart and mind and strength we bring.
Give us grace to love and serve you, liv - ing what we pray and sing.

*Closing Prayer

One: *God, you have given us your child,
and his name is called:*

Many: **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

One: *Once we were no people.
Now you have made us your people.*

Many: **Once we walked in darkness.
Now we have seen a great light.**

All: **Grant that we may live
as people of your light and love. Amen.**

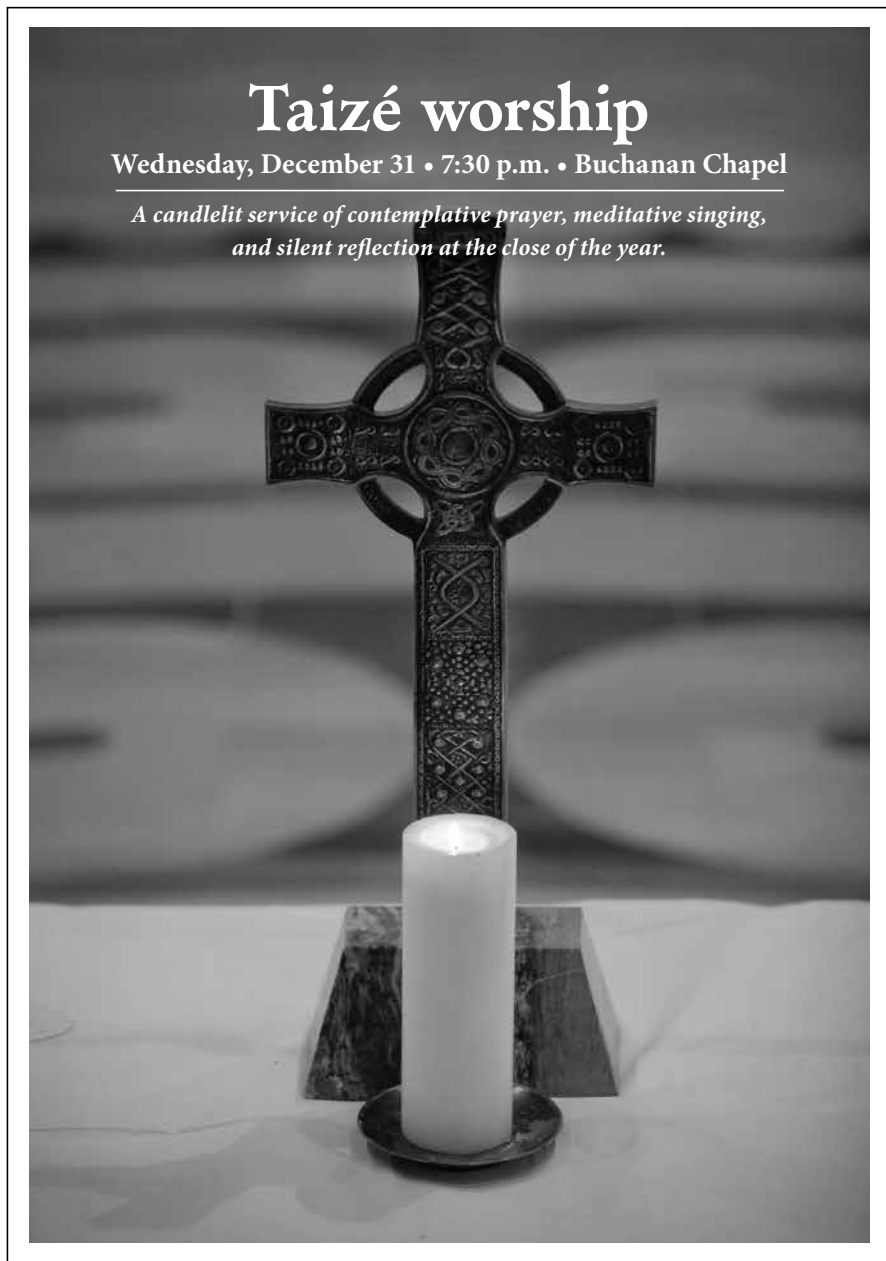
*Carol 136. “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Bearing the Word into the World

*Benediction and Response

Postlude

Angels We Have Heard on High. French carol
arr. Christopher Uehlein



Worship Leaders

Matt Helms, Janet S. Reed, Joyce Shin, Victoria G. Curtiss

The Music Today

The Morning Choir

John W. W. Sherer, Organist and Director of Music

Worship Notes

LIGHT UP A LIFE GIFTS are being received throughout the Christmas season.

This year-end giving campaign supports congregational programs, mission, and community outreach—including Chicago Lights programs—and denominational efforts. “Light Up a Life” gifts can be made using the special offering envelopes found in the pew racks or by writing “Light Up a Life” on the memo line of a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church.

AS THE BULLETIN HEADINGS remind us, the center of our worship is the Word—by which we mean both Scripture, and also the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. When Scripture is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the Living Word is present by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. It is this Living Word that is the center of everything we do in worship. That worship follows the pattern we see in Isaiah 6: adoration, confession, absolution, thanksgiving, and service. We listen for the Word of God. We respond in song, affirmation of our faith, prayer, and the giving of our gifts and dedication of our lives, and then God sends us back into the world to live out our faith, looking for God’s work all around us.

SOURCES AND CREDITS: Hymn tune names—as well as composers of the music and authors of the text—are listed in the hymnal with each hymn. The words to “For the Life that You Have Given” are by Carl P. Daw Jr. © 1987; music is by Morgan Simmons © 1990, 1992 Hope Publishing Co.

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