

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

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Savior of the Nations, Come Johann Sebastian Bach

Introit

“Glory to God” Peruvian melody

Glory to God, glory in the highest! Glory to God, glory to Christ Jesus!

Glory to God, glory to the Spirit! To God be glory forever, alleluia. Amen.

*Doxology (*sung*) The Hymnal, 606

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. Amen.

*Call to Worship and Liturgy of the Advent Wreath

Leader: *In the beginning was the Word—*

spoken and breathed, a promise made and kept.

People: **Speak it loud and clear—God’s promise is true!**

Leader: *The Word was in the beginning,*

and through him all things come into being.

People: **Eternal and near at hand, already and not-yet,**

God’s promise is the foundation of all life.

Leader: *Do not hold back! Speak out, giving voice to God’s peace*

that passes all understanding.

*Hymn 83 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

God of abounding grace, have mercy upon us.

Our valleys are deep when we are encompassed with care.

Our mountains are high when our burdens are heavy.

We grope in the maze of our tangled alliances

and reap the pain of bad choices and misguided pursuits.

Show us the straight path and the smooth road that lead

to your righteousness. Through Jesus Christ, who is the way. Amen.

*Stand as you are able.

Declaration of Pardon

Minister: *Friends, believe the good news.*

People: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson (*responsively*)

Luke 1:68–79 New Testament, page 54

Anthem

“People, Look East” Besançon carol
arr. Philip Dietterich

*People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today; love, the guest, is on the way.
Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there;
give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today; love, the rose, is on the way.
Birds, though ye long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen, he, for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east, and sing today; love, the bird is on the way.
Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today; love, the star, is on the way.
Angels, announce to man and beast him who cometh from the east.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east, and sing today; love, the Lord, is on the way.*

Second Lesson

Malachi 3:1–4 Old Testament, page 838

Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*Gloria Patri (*sung*) The Hymnal, 581

**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. Amen.**

Third Lesson

Luke 3:1-14. New Testament, page 56

Sermon

Preparing the Way Victoria G. Curtiss

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 104 "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"

*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) Brief Statement of Faith

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. Amen.

Commissioning of Minister for Congregational Life

Offering

Offertory Voluntary

Ave Maria. J. S. Bach/Charles Gounod

*Offertory 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.

Sealing the Word

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation

Great Thanksgiving

Minister: *The Lord be with you.*

People: **And also with you.**

Minister: *Lift up your hearts.*

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Minister: *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Prayer

Minister: *It is truly right and our greatest joy . . .*

. . . who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Sanctus (*sung*) The Hymnal, 552

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest,

hosanna in the highest.

Minister: . . . *Great is the mystery of faith:*

Memorial Acclamation (*sung*) The Hymnal, 553

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

The Communion

Communion Anthem

“E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” Paul Manz

*Peace be to you, and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
who loved us all and shed his blood, that we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord, almighty God,
who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein; rejoice on earth,
ye saints below, for Christ is coming soon!
E’en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their all.*

Prayer after Communion (unison)

O God, you have so greatly loved us,
long sought us, and mercifully redeemed us.
Give us grace that in everything we may yield ourselves,
our wills and our works, a continual thank offering to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

*Hymn 105 “People, Look East”

*Benediction and Response

Postlude

Toccatà from *On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry*. Bruce Neswick

This morning, Communion is served by intinction.

The congregation comes forward by the center aisle to receive the bread, which they then dip into the chalice of grape juice. (Gluten-free bread is available in a small tumbler in each basket of bread.)

Worshippers return to their pews by the side aisles.

The invitation to the Lord’s Supper is not just for Presbyterians or “members of the church.” All who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are invited to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Even one who doubts or whose trust is wavering may receive the bread and grape juice (in place of wine) in order to be assured of God’s love and grace in Jesus Christ.

Worship Leaders

Victoria G. Curtiss, Sue Thompson

The Music Today

The Chancel Choir

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

Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

Chelsie Coren, Organ Scholar

Worship Notes

THE “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received throughout December.

“Light Up a Life” provides opportunity to support congregational programs, mission, and community outreach—including Chicago Lights programs—as well as 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.

TODAY’S DRUMMING AND RINGING OF THE BELLS is offered in support of climate justice, as we join churches throughout Paris that are doing the same as that city hosts the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

THE BULLETIN COVER IMAGE depicts one of the ceiling canvases in the arches over the south aisle.

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The Liturgy of the Advent Wreath was written by Teri Peterson, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Palatine. 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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