

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

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## Gathering around the Word

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### Prelude

Variation on a Noël . . . . . Jean Langlais  
Of the Father's Love Begotten . . . . . Wilbur Held

### Introit

“Alleluia, to Us a Child Is Born” . . . . . Iain Quinn  
*Alleluia, to us a child is born; comem 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*). . . . . 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

Leader: *We who knelt in the stable—*

People: **let us come and kneel in the temple!**

Leader: *Let our hearts give thanks, and our hands rejoice!*

People: **Let our spirits sing, and our bodies dance!**

Leader: *O women and men, boys and girls, enter the house of the Lord!*

People: **Enter God's presence and be reborn!**

\*Hymn 147 . . . . . “The First Nowell”

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*\*Stand as you are able.*

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Faithful God, we rejoice that you have sent your promised Christ. But we confess that we are still not ready for Christ’s coming and are reluctant to live as if the whole earth were your domain. We have become addicted to doubt and negativity. We know the story—the shepherds, the angels, the magi—but we don’t fully understand what it means. And so we’ve picked up the scraps of Christmas wrapping. We are ready to put away the tree, and we confess that we are tempted to put away the hope of the season too. Forgive us, Lord Jesus. Keep us awake to the hope you have announced. Help us to proclaim it in the way we live, in the way we talk, in the way we think. In the name of the babe in the manger, we pray. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Minister: *Friends, believe the good news.*

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Concerns of the Church

Anthem

“Under the Stars” . . . . . George F. Reynolds  
*Under the stars one holy night, a little babe was born.  
Over his head a star shone bright and glistened ’til the morn.  
And wise men came from far away, and shepherds wandered where he lay  
upon the lowly bed of hay, under the stars one night.  
Under the stars one blessed night, the Christ child came to earth.  
And through the darkness broke the light of morning at his birth.  
And sweet hosannas filled the air and guardian angels watched him  
where the virgin mother knelt in prayer, under the stars one night.  
Under the stars this happy night, we wait for him once more  
and seem to see the wondrous sight the shepherds saw of yore.  
O baby born in Bethlehem, come to us as you came to them  
and crown us with love’s diadem, under the stars one night.*

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Listening for the Word

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Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

Colossians 3:12–17 . . . . . New Testament, page 190

Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

Hymn 141 . . . . . “On This Day Earth Shall Ring”

Second Lesson

Luke 2:41-52. . . . . New Testament, page 55

Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Growing Up . . . . . Judith L. Watt

Responding to the Word

\*Hymn 132 . . . . . “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

\*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) . . . . . Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

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

“Amen” . . . . . Dale Wood

Offertory Anthem

“In the Bleak Mid-Winter” . . . . . Harold Darke

*In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
in the bleak mid-winter long ago.  
Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign.  
In the bleak mid-winter, a stable place sufficed,  
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.  
Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,  
a breast full of milk, and a manger full of hay.  
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel, which adore.  
What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him, give my heart.*

\*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.

\*Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

**Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was presented in the temple and was acclaimed the glory of Israel and the light of the nations. Grant that in him we may be presented to you and also reflect his glory in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

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## Bearing the Word into the World

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

\*Benediction and Response

Postlude

Improvisation on “On This Day Earth Shall Ring”

## Worship Leaders

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Nanette Sawyer, Hardy H. Kim, Judith L. Watt,

## The Music Today

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The Morning Choir

Gillian Hollis and Craig Palmer, soloists

Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

## Worship Notes

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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.

FOURTH CHURCH OFFERS A VARIETY of worship opportunities on Sunday, including an 8:00 a.m. Communion service, worship at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m., and a jazz service with Communion at 4:00 p.m. Each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., Morning Prayer is held in Buchanan Chapel as a time to remember in prayer members of the Fourth Church congregation and those in need. We also offer a monthly prayer service in the style of Taizé, which meets this month on Thursday, December 31 (New Year’s Eve) at 7:30 p.m.

THE BULLETIN COVER photo depicts a painting of a kneeling angel in one of the arches over the south aisle of the Sanctuary, rendered by muralist Frederick Clay Bartlett in 1914.

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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**Shannon J. Kershner** Pastor

**Victoria G. Curtiss** Associate Pastor for Mission

**Matt Helms** Associate Pastor  
for Children and Family Ministry

**Hardy H. Kim** Associate Pastor for Evangelism

**Judith L. Watt** Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

**Nanette Sawyer** Minister for Congregational Life

**Jeffrey Doane** Parish Associate for Older Adults

**Layton Williams** Pastoral Resident

**John Buchanan** Pastor Emeritus

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**THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO**  
Church office: 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL 60611.2014  
[www.fourthchurch.org](http://www.fourthchurch.org) | [www.facebook.com/fourthchurch](https://www.facebook.com/fourthchurch)  
312.787.4570 | Voicemail 312.787.2729 | Fax: 312.787.4584