

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

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

- O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright Johann Pachelbel
See the Eastern Star Puerto Rican carol
arr. Michael Burkhardy
Star of Hope Richard Key Biggs

Introit

“Saw You Never, in the Twilight” Harold Friedell
*Saw you never, in the twilight, when the sun had left the skies;
up in heaven, the clear stars shining through the gloom like silver eyes?
So of old the wise men, watching, saw a little stranger star,
and they knew the King was given, and they followed it from far.
Know ye not that lowly baby was the bright and morning star?
He who came to light the Gentiles and the darkened isles afar?
And we, too, may seek his cradle; there our hearts best treasures bring:
love and faith and true devotion for our Savior, God, and King.*

*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

Minister: *Arise; shine, for your light has come,*
People: **and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us.**
Minister: *The brightness of God’s light shines upon all the nations.*
People: **All are welcomed to the brightness of God’s dawn.**
Minister: *With our gifts, with our very selves, let us worship God.*

*Prayer of Praise

*Hymn 147 “The First Nowell”

**Stand as you are able.*

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

God of justice, we confess that our actions can feed evil
whenever we remain passive while others are oppressed;
whenever we guard our own prosperity
at the expense of those who are poor;
or when we ignore the cries of those in need of help
and pretend not to hear them.
Forgive us, we pray, for hiding in the shadows of this world
more than loving the light of your righteousness.
Judge us with mercy, we pray, and strengthen our faithfulness.
We pray in the name of Christ, our Light. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Minister: *Friends, believe the good news.*
People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Concerns of the Church

Minute for Mission

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter (*responsively*)

Psalm 72:1-14 Old Testament, page 504

Anthem

“A Christmas Carol” Charles Ives
*Little star of Bethlehem! Do we see thee now?
Do we see thee shining o’er the tall trees?
Little child of Bethlehem! Do we hear thee in our hearts?
Hear the angels singing, “Peace on earth, goodwill to all.” Noel.
O’er the cradle of a King, hear the angels sing, “Glory in the highest.”
From his Father’s home on high, lo, for us he came to die.
Hear the angels sing, “Come, let us adore the Lord.”*

First Lesson

Isaiah 60:1-6. Old Testament, page 649
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.

Second Lesson

Matthew 2:1-12. New Testament, page 1

Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon. Shannon J. Kershner

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 152 “What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright”

*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” Florence Worthington

Offering

Offertory Anthem

“How Far Is It to Bethlehem?” Geoffrey Shaw
How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far. Shall we find the stable room, lit by a star?
Can we see the little child; is he within? If we lift the wooden latch, may we go in?
May we stroke the creatures there, ox, ass, and sheep? May we be like them
and see Jesus asleep? If we touch his tiny hand, will he awake? Will he know we’d
come so far, just for his sake? Great kings leave precious gifts, and we have naught.
Little smiles and little tears are all we brought. For all weary children, Mary must
weep; here, on his bed of straw, sleep, children, sleep. God in his mother’s arms,
babes in the byre, sleep as they sleep who find their heart’s desire.

*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)

You have given us the gift of your grace, O God,
that we might share it with others.
Receive now, we ask, what we have given today.
Use these offerings,
and use us for your plans and purposes.
We pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

*Hymn 151 “We Three Kings of Orient Are”

Bearing the Word into the World

*Benediction and Response

Postlude

In Thee Is Joy Johannes Matthias Michel

Worship in the Reformed Tradition

As the headings in our bulletin remind us each week, the center of our worship is **the Word**—by which we mean both Scripture and the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. Our Scripture witnesses to God and God’s activity. When it 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 (page 597 of the Old Testament): adoration, confession, absolution, thanksgiving, and service. Overwhelmed by God’s majesty and glory, we **gather** together in **praise** offered through song and prayer.

In the face of that great goodness of God, we also see how we fall short of being who we were created to be and so we join in a **prayer of confession**. We then proclaim the **forgiveness** that we know in Jesus Christ. We live our lives in this cycle of realizing where we fall short, being honest to God about that, and then recognizing that God always forgives us, even before the words are on our lips, and lets us start new.

As we listen for the Word of God, **Scripture** is read. The **sermon** is proclaimed. We respond to the Word with thanksgiving, joining in **song** and **affirming our faith**, using words from the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s *Book of Confessions*—whether it be the Apostles’ Creed, a Brief Statement of Faith, or one of the other professions of faith—or words taken directly from Scripture.

Following Jesus’ instruction to pray, in the **Prayers of the People** we bring human need before God in hope, trust, and thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness, concluding with the **Lord’s Prayer**. Our response of thanksgiving also includes the giving of our material goods, bringing to God the **offerings** of our work as symbols of our gratitude and our acknowledgment that everything we have comes from God. In prayer we **dedicate** these gifts and our lives to the work of the church and God’s mission.

God then **sends** us, like Isaiah, back out into the world in service. Our final **hymn** of grateful praise moves directly into a **charge and blessing** to take what we have heard, to take what we have learned, and to actively live it out in the world, looking for God’s work all around us.

Worship Leaders

Victoria G. Curtiss, John W. Vest, Shannon J. Kershner

The Music Today

The Morning Choir

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

Worship Notes

TODAY'S MINUTE FOR MISSION is presented by Karen Ross on behalf of the Sunlight Project Mission group.

TODAY WE RECALL THE GIFTS brought by the magi who followed the light of the star, a generosity that gave rise to our own gift-giving tradition at this time of year. Light up a Light gifts offer opportunity to join in that generosity by giving gifts that support 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.

THE BULLETIN COVER depicts part of the the Jardine organ, currently on loan to Fourth Church and located in the East Balcony of the Sanctuary. Built in 1850, it is the oldest playing pipe organ in Chicago. The cover quote is from an Epiphany prayer in Walter Brueggemann's book, *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*.

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