

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

Gathering around the Word

Prelude # Noël Aaron David Miller

Introit # “Alleluia. To Us a Child Is Born” Iain Quinn

*Doxology (*sung*) The Hymnal, 606

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Call to Worship

Leader: *We were heavy with sorrow, but joy interrupted.
We were silent with sadness, but the heavens rang.*

People: **Glory to God in the highest!**

Leader: *We were hardened by conflict, but love intervened.
We were haunted by fears, but a child brought us hope.*

People: **Glory to God in the highest!**

Leader: *We were dismal and defeated, but faith set us on fire.
We were doubtful and confused, but a door to life was opened.*

People: **Glory to God in the highest!**

Leader: *We were sheep who had lost their way but the shepherd knew our names.
We were children far from home but in the Holy One have found our way.*

People: **Glory to God in the Highest! For to us a child is born.**

*Hymn 132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

God of Christmastide, while Mary was faithful to your call, we chafe against the inconvenience of your plans. While the shepherds rushed to find you, in our self-interest we lack holy curiosity. While Jesus was born in the poverty of a manger, we have overlooked the poor and vulnerable in our midst. Forgive the sin in our hearts. Draw us closer to your presence and your way, that we might cast aside the veil of wrongdoing and behold your glory and be illumined by your love.

*Stand as you are able.

Declaration of Pardon

Leader: *Friends, believe the good news:*

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

*Exchange of Peace

Leader: *The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

People: **And also with you.**

We invite you to greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ.”

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lesson :: Isaiah 9:2–7 Old Testament, page 600

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.

Scripture Lesson :: Luke 1:26–38 New Testament, page 53

Hymn 98 “To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary”

Scripture Lesson :: Luke 2:8–19 New Testament, page 54

*Anthem :: “Christmas Hymn” Hugo Jüngst

*While by my sheep I watched at night, glad tidings brought an angel bright,
how great my joy! Praise we the Lord in heaven on high.*

“There shall be born,” so he did say, “in Bethlehem a child today.

There shall he lie, in manger mean, who shall redeem the world from sin.”

Lord, evermore to me be nigh, then shall my heart be filled with joy.

Scripture Lesson :: John 1:1–14 New Testament, page 86

Carol 110 “Love Has Come”

Responding to the Word

*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.

Offering

*Offertory Voluntary :: Rondeau Jean François Dandrieu

*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

Leader: *The Lord be with you.*

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: *Lift up your hearts.*

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

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

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

Prayer

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

. . . forever singing to the glory of your name:

Sanctus (*sung*) The Hymnal, 572

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.

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

Memorial Acclamation (*sung*) The Hymnal, 573

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

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*) The Hymnal, page 35

The Communion

Prayer after Communion

Leader: . . . *O Lord our God,*

People: **now the work of Christmas begins.**

Bearing the Word into the World

*Hymn 136 “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

*Benediction and Response

Postlude ♫ Angels We Have Heard on High. French carol; arr. Christopher Uelein

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.) Worshipers 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.” 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

Garnie Head, Joseph L. Morrow

The Music Today

Chancel Choir

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

Worship Notes

THE “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received throughout the Christmas season. “Light Up a Life” provides opportunity to support congregational programs, mission, and community outreach, including Chicago Lights programs. “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. You can also make your gift using Venmo (@Fourth-Church) or online (at www.fourthchurch.org/give-online).

If you give electronically or make your contributions on a monthly or annual basis, we encourage you to take part in today’s offering by placing in the offering plate an “I give” card that you will find in the pew racks.

Shannon J. Kershner Pastor

Lucy Forster-Smith Senior Associate Pastor

Associate Pastors

Victoria G. Curtiss Mission

Matt Helms Children and Family Ministry

Nanette Sawyer Discipleship and Small Group Ministry

Rocky Supinger Youth Ministry

Joseph L. Morrow Minister for Evangelism

Jeffrey Doane Parish Associate for Older Adults

Maggie Shreve Parish Associate for Jail Ministry

John Buchanan Pastor Emeritus

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The Call to Worship is adapted from Kenneth I. Morse (rockhay.tripod.com). 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. The Prayer after Communion is adapted from “Now The Work Of Christmas Begins” by Howard Thurman

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